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NATIONAL MUNICIPAL LEAGUE

# The League's Business

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## Municipal Reporting Consultant Service for California

The Columbia Foundation in San Francisco has made a grant to the National Municipal League to assist in establishing a Municipal Reporting Consultant Service in California, which will be under the direction of Miss Miriam Roher. The service will offer to cities, public agencies, and civic organizations help and advice in planning and preparing reports, newspaper material, leaflets, direct mail "advertising," radio programs, and other devices designed to tell citizens what their government is doing and why. Miss Roher, former publications editor of the National Municipal League and a contributing editor to the NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, has spent the past year conducting a series of field experiments in California to test the effectiveness of various municipal reporting methods.

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## New Model City Charter Published

The fifth and most completely revised edition since 1900 of the *Model City Charter* has been scheduled for publication November 15 after more than four years of work by a committee appointed by Harold W. Dodds, then president of the National Municipal League. Richard S. Childs is chairman of the committee.

Since the *Charter* made its first appearance in 1900, it has increasingly become the working tool of legislative draftsmen and a textbook on municipal administration for students of the subject within and without our schools and universities. It has had more influence on efforts to improve local government than any other single document.

This edition of the *Model City Charter* has been completely rewritten and reorganized in order to take full advantage of the progress made during the last decade in administration, financial planning, fiscal control, personnel, city planning, zoning, housing and slum clearance, election methods, public utilities, and special assessments. All of these subjects have been restudied by groups of eminent specialists coöperating with the committee. The provisions of finance, for example, have greatly benefited by the services of seventy additional specialists who are members of the League's Committee on a Model Fiscal Program which is revising the League's series of model fiscal laws.

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## Model State Constitution Revised

The fourth edition of the *Model State Constitution*, originally published in 1921 and revised in 1928 and 1933, is scheduled for publication November 15. The revision has been carried on by the League's Committee on State Government, of which W. Brooke Graves of Temple University is chairman, and which was appointed in 1939 by C. A. Dykstra, then president of the

(Continued on Page 647)



# National Municipal Review

## Editorial Comment

### Philadelphia Is No Defense "Boom Town"

**T**HERE is a limit—or ought to be—to the propositions which are to be permitted to march in, line up, click their heels together, and yell, "Here, sir!" when someone calls the role of vital defense projects.

It is now proposed that, in the name of defense, the United States government help modernize the water and sewage systems of Philadelphia. That Philadelphia needs these facilities is no secret to any resident or visitor who possesses a sense of smell or who considers water something to drink. In these matters Philadelphia's needs are more desperate than most cities, more desperate than any other large city. But it is pertinent to examine a few facts.

First, Philadelphia is no "defense boom town"; it is not comparable to communities whose populations have grown in a few weeks from hundreds to thousands. On the contrary, Philadelphia's billion dollars worth of defense orders have been a boon by increasing employment.

Second, the United States government's money is the money of all the country's people, *including* the people of hundreds of places which long ago had the courage and intelligence to kick out political plunderers and install sound management.

Third, it is patently unfair to say, in effect, to the hundreds of cities which have gone through the arduous process of putting their own houses in order—and footing the bill themselves—"Philadelphians haven't the

courage to do this for themselves, so now you'll have to bail them out."

The deplorable state of Philadelphia's services, basic equipment, and sense of civic morality is nothing new. Someone should have come to Philadelphia's rescue years ago, and that "someone" is none other than the people of Philadelphia!

But the time for change apparently is not yet. The city has had and still has notable, high-minded civic leadership, but, one way or another, the politicians have been too resourceful. If the venality of state legislatures has not nullified local efforts to straighten out the mess, political bosses with an eye to possible loss of strength in national contests have said "no" to anything which might weaken the traditional spoils system by which party workers are paid at public expense.

A year or so ago 75 per cent of the people of Philadelphia were ready to vote for a new charter<sup>1</sup> which would have helped meet the difficulties, but entrenched bossism in the state legislature laughed the enabling act down. Will the people vote these legislators out of office? Not if they follow their usual habits.

So, as a result of countenancing generation after generation of political plunderers, Philadelphia's borrowing ability is complicated and exhausted—the natural result of past behavior. It has hocked its gas plant revenues. It has been driven to the

<sup>1</sup>According to a Gallup poll.

desperate expedient of a payroll tax.

Now there is no desire here to wish Philadelphia any bad luck. After all, Philadelphia was the birthplace not only of the United States constitution but also of the National Municipal League. For the first twenty-five years of the League's life it was our "home town." But now that we are forty-eight and have been away from the "City of Brotherly Love" for more than twenty years, we can be forgiven a bit of seeming ingratitude if we raise a questioning

eyebrow over this proposal to bail her out at the expense of others.

It would be very wholesome indeed for Philadelphia to get herself out of her own mess. One piece of help from her rich old uncle won't produce a real solution of what ails her. The road to municipal competence and a sense of civic responsibility is a steep one and one which must be travelled alone to procure lasting benefit. It won't be healthful to repeal the old adage, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap."

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## Priorities for City Services

**I**T IS imperative that the system which has been set up by the Priorities Division at Washington to enable cities and public utilities to keep essential municipal services operating be made to work automatically, with a minimum of red tape.

This is no more than recognition of the obvious fact that local communities are the roots of our entire system. The *Toledo City Journal* states the case well:

"A nation that is sick in its civic, industrial, and commercial life, a nation that is not able to keep the machinery of production and transportation working smoothly, is one that is marked for defeat in any major conflict, irrespective of how many men and cannons are put in the field.

"Cities, in turn, are the agencies by which the commercial and business life of the community functions. Cities are needed for the maintenance of highways and water lines, of sewers and power lines, of communication cables and alarm systems, so

that large groups of people can crowd about production centers to turn out the necessities of war and move them to the front. . . . It is important that every supply or every bit of equipment a city may consider essential to its smooth operation be made available during this emergency with as little effort as possible."

Official remote control of our communities is none too healthy a thing and, unless a lot of needless pulling and hauling is really eliminated, it can be damaging not only to the defense effort itself but also to the basic principle of local home rule and responsibility. The tendency of governments to be unwilling to relinquish controls once established is disquieting. After achieving some success in the long effort to run their own affairs without having to trot to the state capitol for permission, cities will scarcely want to find in a post-war period that they must get approval from federal bureaus for everything they want to do.



# Playing Politics with Public Health

*Long continued action by interested citizens of Washtenaw County, Michigan, finally successful in replacing township health units with single county board under competent jurisdiction.*

By ARTHUR W. BROMAGE and MARY C. BROMAGE  
*University of Michigan*

NO MATTER within the political purview touches voters more closely than public health. Disease is international in character; interstate, intercounty, intervillage, and intertownship as well. When bacteria travel by air from one hemisphere to the other what is there to stop them from traveling the horse and buggy route? An epidemic of poliomyelitis, rampant in one township, does not halt at the grass-grown boundary line. One tubercular cow, grazing in an upstate pasture, may carry the fate of city folk resident hundreds of miles away.

The state of Michigan was not slow to follow the example set by the state of Washington in 1911, where Yakima County created a full-time health department to combat a siege of typhoid fever. Approximately four-fifths of Michigan's eighty-three counties have now co-ordinated their individual health programs under medical direction since the opportunity was offered them by state law in 1927.<sup>1</sup> Such measures, though made possible by state legislation, are put into practice only at the instigation of each county's board of supervisors.

In the fertile and diversified belt

of southern Michigan, not far from Detroit, lies one of the state's most flourishing counties. Washtenaw not only comes within the orbit of the world's largest automobile city, but its twenty townships contain—besides two cities, one fifth-class city and four villages—the state university, a state normal college, state hospitals, two airports, diversified industrial plants, and extensive farms. With the construction in 1941 of a Ford bomber plant for some 60,000 workers on government orders, the locality has become a hive of defense activity.

The county's wealth, industry, agriculture, educational development to the contrary notwithstanding, Washtenaw remained one of the few counties which repeatedly refused to adopt a county health department.

The Board of Supervisors of Washtenaw County harbored a variety of reasons for opposing citizens who demanded a better bill of health. Fear of state domination made them hug their local prerogatives in this as in other fields. Penny wisdom prompted them to pound foolishness in refusing to appropriate money for adequate health protection; while huge sums were yearly expended for hospitalization, next to nothing went

<sup>1</sup>Michigan, *Public Acts*, 1927, No. 306.

for preventive work. Doubting Thomases among them wanted guarantees of the permanence of outside subsidies for a health program. Above all, many supervisors remained convinced that the old way was best.

### Score of Local Boards

What was the old way—almost as old, in fact, as the state itself? There were throughout the county more than a score of health boards—one for every township, village, and city. Each health board was locally chosen, and each board appointed its own health officer. In the townships the general township board served *ex officio* as the health board. The permissive statute passed in 1838 providing for such a system was affected by later legislation making it mandatory for the local board of health to appoint as health officer a “well educated physician” except where this was not practicable.<sup>2</sup>

More than half a century ago, Detroit’s first health officer declared that “the township health unit was almost worthless.” He continued: “The only remedy is to enlarge the territorial unit of sanitary administration so that a health officer may be employed who can give his entire time and energy to his official work.”<sup>3</sup>

In Washtenaw County before this decentralized structure was changed, out of twenty township health officers only five were doctors. Out of the fifteen who were not doctors eleven were the supervisors them-

selves and thereby partly self-appointed. Compensation for the services of these officers, fixed and paid by each township individually, varied from about ten to fifty dollars.

It was the duty of these health officers, many of whom were farmers and primarily occupied in earning their families’ livelihoods, to execute within their petty thirty-six square miles of jurisdiction all state rules and regulations regarding public health, which were legion. Little wonder the average lay health agent in the township took his job with a grain of salt.

Under this old-law situation, was the county a salubrious place in which to live?<sup>4</sup> While neighboring counties with health departments were reducing their death rates, Washtenaw’s infant mortality in the rural areas rose from an average of 37 per 1,000 live births in the years 1929-31 to an average of 59 in 1935-37. In 1939, when the average of the state as a whole was 41.85 infant deaths for every 1,000 live births, rural Washtenaw County averaged 51.22.

Some cases of communicable diseases went unreported. Tuberculosis increased. “Considering only those counties with fairly large populations it is found that, in comparison with the Washtenaw . . . [death rate from tuberculosis] of 26.1, Kent County showed a rate of 24.2; Bay County, 21.5; Ingham County, 18.3; Jackson County, 16.8; and Oakland County, 13.0. The last named coun-

<sup>2</sup>Michigan, *Revised Statutes*, 1846, chap. 35, sec. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Dr. O. W. Wight, in *Tr. Mich. State Med. Soc.*, 1886, VI, 270. Quoted in *Public Health Reviews*, Ann Arbor, Mich., April 15, 1937.

<sup>4</sup>Many of the facts and figures cited were collected by the Citizens’ Committee of Washtenaw County and made available by its chairman, Dr. John S. DeTar.



ty with a rate that is half that of Washtenaw is a county with a high concentration of industry. It also has a high concentration of tuberculosis control activities."<sup>5</sup> The average death rate in 1939 in the state as a whole was 10.2 per 1,000 persons, in Washtenaw County as a whole it was 11.69, while in the rural sections of the county it was 13.8.

#### Other Counties Progress

Counties with full-time public health facilities offered Washtenaw a study in contrasts. In Ottawa County, before a health department came into being, babies under one year of age died at the average annual rate of 47 per 1,000. A few years later, after a health program got under way, the number fell to 35, due to prenatal, maternal, and infant care. The Iron County Health Department reported that its death rate among infants dropped from 74 per 1,000 in 1935 to 20 in 1939.

In the district covering the four counties of Antrim, Emmet, Otsego and Charlevoix, the infant mortality was brought down from an average of 85.5 deaths per 1,000 annually before intensification of health activities to 57.6 deaths afterward. Whereas this district suffered from 104 cases of diptheria between 1925 and 1928, there was not a single case between 1932 and 1936.

The more apparent the need for consolidated reorganization became to Washtenaw's leading citizens, the more obdurate their elected repre-

sentatives became. When, back in 1929, provision had been made by state law to extend to counties establishing health departments an annual grant not to exceed \$3,000, the local supervisors had not risen to the bait.

In the following year, not only was a motion favoring the health unit tabled indefinitely but all motions relating to the subject were stricken from the record of the supervisors' *Proceedings*. The challenge of that action precipitated renewed indignation over unhygienic and unhealthy conditions. A committee of the Board of Supervisors in 1931 recommended adoption of a budget and appointment of a designated staff for a health department in a report which was subsequently and repeatedly placed on the table.

There the matter rested for all official purposes for the next seven or eight years. An offer of over \$17,000 to be used for health measures, made in 1931 by the Children's Fund, a private foundation, was withdrawn when the supervisors failed to act. Subsequently, the national government under the social security act authorized the appropriation of a sum of money to subsidize such work within the subdivisions of the state, but the Washtenaw supervisors, having avoided state and private aid, still adhered to their time-honored, time-worn health functions.

The aroused citizenry ceased to fulminate and in 1939 became, in the words of the courthouse, a pressure group. Under the leadership of a young, country practitioner—the president of his county medical so-

<sup>5</sup>*The Ann Arbor Survey; A Study of the Social Welfare, Recreational and Public Health Program.* Ann Arbor, Mich., 1940. p. 75.

ciety—groups of women banded together in one-room school districts throughout the county. They approached their supervisors individually and collectively, in meetings, on the street, in the kitchen, and through the mail box. They reported to the Citizens' Committee failure to quarantine contagious cases in their neighborhoods; pointed out a case of active tuberculosis in one who held an important township office.

### Citizens Organize

A speakers' bureau was organized, petitions were signed, material was secured from the state capital, pamphlets were distributed with funds privately contributed. The deputy state health commissioner, upon local invitation, made a three-day speaking tour of the county. A sound truck carrying special exhibits and movies to show progress in public health administration and sanitation visited all corners of Washtenaw.

Civic organizations were polled and American Legion posts, farm bureaus, women's sewing bees, medical and dental societies, men's service organizations, child study clubs, granges, chambers of commerce, and secret lodges went on record in favor of the reform. While out-county men and women were at work in the villages and on the farms, an urban group rolled up its shirt-sleeves at the county seat in Ann Arbor. This city seats seven supervisors out of the thirty-three on the board.

The issue was again laid at the door of the supervisors in October 1939, when the Citizens' Committee sent a representative to appear before them. In addition, a communication

was addressed in writing to the board. The letter, signed not only by those at the head of the Citizens' Committee but by 250 members as well, concluded: "This committee, working entirely in the interests of better health in this county, has no desire for reward, jobs, positions, or patronage. . . . If a county health department is not provided for by this session of the board, the members of the Citizens' Committee will, before the April meeting, intensify efforts in the townships and wards where the understanding of its efforts is not complete."

After this communication had been referred to the Health and Finance Committees of the Board of Supervisors, the Health Committee recommended adoption of a health department. The board, by a vote of eighteen to fourteen with one absent, adopted this recommendation which included a budget slightly lower than that advanced by the Citizens' Committee, and by the same motion referred it to the Finance Committee.

The supervisors' discussion on the proposition was shot through with all the old taboos, some suspicions of socialized medicine, and a charge that the idea was "based on the Soviet setup." Insinuations were levelled at the citizens "pressure group."

Less than a week later the Finance Committee made its general report for the year without recommending any appropriation for the anticipated county health plan. The supervisors then voted that the whole matter be reconsidered and referred to a special committee, thus postponing once again the advent of public health administration at the county level.



Meanwhile, the City Council of Ann Arbor indicated its intention to remain out of the proposed health agency.<sup>6</sup> Subsequently, all seven of Ann Arbor's representatives on the Board of Supervisors voted against the proposed county health department. Early in the year 1940 the City Council put its part-time health department on full time, the effect of which under state law, so long as it endured, would serve to exclude the city from any county program which might come into being, unless the city should elect to join with the county health organization.

Meantime, the special Health Committee of Supervisors, to which the board had referred the matter in October 1939, was at work. These special investigators proceeded to take their duties seriously, and, driving in a sheriff's car with a deputy at the wheel, departed on what the *Ann Arbor News* called "junkets." When this body was ready to report back to the supervisors in January, 1940, they pointed out that, in the counties visited, most of the original health-unit appropriations had been raised from year to year; that hospitalization costs had mounted; that a county health department must, in any case, be paid for in years to come. Their statement made no recommendation and was placed on file.

The pressure group, as the Citizens' Committee had been labeled by its opponents, outmaneuvered by the events of 1939-1940, retired to

gather up its forces. The young doctor, early in 1941, turned the leadership over to a revamped group summoned specifically to continue the struggle with new weapons.

#### New Tactics Adopted

Instead of working in the open under the glare of as much publicity as possible, the committee adopted new tactics of discretion and subtlety. The inner council determined to carry the issue back to the ward primaries and township caucuses, as their communication to the board had promised. Picked candidates secured party nominations for positions on the county board. Certain city wards became hotbeds of contest at election time with a doorbell ringer in every disputed block. As a result of more than one election, a woman was elected in one ward, the first to serve on the board in her own right and the wife of a distinguished surgeon; other city supervisors were replaced, the newcomers including a physician from the state university's student health service.

Afternoon tea-parties were held at which country women met city women to exchange reports of contagion, exposure and lack of sanitation in the county. The *Washtenaw Post-Tribune*, weekly county newspaper, swung its editorial and news columns into the attack.

In the spring of 1941, with pressure being brought to bear from rural and urban sides alike, with new supervisors installed on the board, with Ann Arbor's relation to the situation clarified if not solved, the new Health Committee of the Supervisors, itself divided, succeeded in in-

<sup>6</sup>Ann Arbor Common Council, October 24, 1939. The council defeated a peculiar motion that the Board of Supervisors add to their budget enough to take over the health unit of the city of Ann Arbor.

viting the deputy state health commissioner to present the matter afresh to the board.

This official outlined a plan for a county health department pared to the bone, with a budget of \$17,600—far less costly and comprehensive than any previous estimate, but a plan whereby the county could qualify to receive state and federal aid. The work must be financed coöperatively in the first instance out of county funds; but if the sum of \$525 were to be added to what the supervisors already were allocating for health, it would be sufficient to warrant the state's subsidy of \$3,000 and federal money in the neighborhood of \$4,500. Under no circumstances could the proposed executive health office draw upon county funds over and above the appropriation.

At the center of the proposed system, as in all county departments, stood the full-time health officer, a doctor specially trained in public health and chosen by the county board with the approval of the state health commissioner. The outlined minimal staff subordinate to the health officer consisted of a sanitary engineer, four nurses, and a clerk. Office space meant only a desk and telephone. Nurses already on the job would be re-engaged.

The work of the staff would mean a program of infant, pre-school, maternal, and adult hygiene; active control of communicable diseases including tubercular and venereal cases through early discovery and checkups; clinics, immunization, laboratory services, diagnostic consultation, rigorous enforcement of health laws and regulations; scientific col-

lecting and reporting of vital statistics; sanitation of water and milk supplies, restriction of sewage and garbage disposal; inspection of schools, resorts, slaughter-houses, eating-places; abatement of nuisances; and community education.

Before the new plan was put to a vote by the supervisors, the old controversy renewed itself and the tricks of the trade were called into play. An attempted motion to adjourn the board's session nearly cut debate short. Could a health department, once established, be abolished if the supervisors so desired? They were reminded of the previously delivered opinion of the attorney-general saying such action could be taken at any time, and that refusal to appropriate annual funds would amount to the same thing. As a matter of fact, not one county in Michigan with a health department has ever abandoned it.

Another ghost which had to be laid was the threat to local autonomy. The state, the board was assured, would merely advise, not supervise. Nor could the state force an increase in the county's appropriation from year to year, however much changing conditions might render it advisable.

Do township health officers automatically lose their jobs under a health department? The supervisors were answered with an emphatic "no," although the law permits a township to delegate its health functions to the county department. If township health officers continue to act, the central health officer is none the less responsible for coördinating the entire county.

Will the federal subsidy be with-



drawn, another supervisor asked? Repetition of a statement from the office of the surgeon-general of the United States Public Health Service cleared up this moot point: "In this regard it can only be said that like all other governmental activities, continuance is dependent upon appropriating bodies. However, it also can be said that the federal government, through the authorization set forth in the federal social security act, and previous federal enactments, has been definitely committed to a program of federal aid in this field of public health."<sup>7</sup>

#### A Favorable Vote

By a vote of twenty-one to eleven with one absent, the board went on record in May 1941 as favoring a county health unit to be set up at the beginning of the state's fiscal year, July 1, 1941, and referred the question to its Finance and Health Committees for report at the next session of the board.

In June the substance of the favorable committee report was adopted by the board, but only after a last fling by filibuster was the minimal budget adopted by unanimous vote. The Health Committee of the board was empowered to engage a director (to be approved by the board); to assist him in organizing the department; and to supervise its operation. For the past few months now Washtenaw County has been operating a

full-time health department under a trained director.

This Michigan county was peculiarly reluctant and slow in translating a democratic demand into an administrative reality. No one reason tells the whole story, but several factors add up to explain this failure.

(1) Washtenaw County is wealthy as compared with certain upstate counties which were quick to accept state, federal, and private aid for amelioration of their health conditions. The Washtenaw supervisors could afford to do more talking about local self-government, freedom from state interference, and the dangers lurking in federal influence. A gift from such sources was looked upon as the poisoned apple which they, unlike Snow White, were not going to eat.

(2) The City Council of Ann Arbor, which was the county seat, was more interested in preserving its own municipal health department than in a coördinated city-county program.

(3) The time lag between the initial proposal of a county health department and the crystallization of public opinion was considerable. When the idea was first advanced ten or more years ago, it had the backing of professional students of public health administration, political scientists, and laymen and laywomen who could have been counted on the fingers. However qualified this group was technically in advocating transition from the township to the county basis, it was not intimately associated with the life of the region as a whole. As a result the preliminary skirmishes were headlong encounters between the experts on the outside

<sup>7</sup>Statement contained in a letter dated January 19, 1940, from the office of the Surgeon-General of the United States Public Health Service. See Citizens' Committee, *Facts Concerning the Question of a County Health Department*, Washtenaw County, 1941.

and the rural members of the county board. The experts did not wait to build their political fences before assailing the courthouse powers. It was not until 1939 that the core of informed opinion grew to include natural community leadership.

(4) After popular sentiment became articulate throughout the townships, it was still difficult to correlate this with the political process proper. Few of the incumbent supervisors could be immediately brought to accountability in their constituencies for their votes in the general sessions of the board. In some sections election of new members was the only recourse. Success at the polls is related to a multiplicity of factors including party and length of tenure. For some time the Citizens' Committee shied away from direct political intervention, but direct action in securing favorable representation became necessary. The structural setup in Michigan does not lend itself to a situation where candidates for the Board of Supervisors campaign on issues. Instead, they stand on personal and party lines in small territorial units. Once elected, the individual's part in policy formation may be lost in the shuffle, particularly if he is a newcomer, relegated to unimportant committee assignments. A small county board, elected at large on nonpartisan lines, might promote correlation between issues and elections. In the absence of such a scheme the citizens, once driven to seeking new supervisors, had to work through a complex pattern of representation.

The *dénouement* of this serial story was eventually accomplished by a

combination of methods. The citizen-backers tried and tried again with new tactics till they climaxed a varied and ramified campaign with success. They capitalized on the protest-value of existing, unhygienic conditions. *Vox populi* is louder over perpetrated outrages than when raised in behalf of an abstract ideal.

Formulation of a positive program, ready for concrete action, requires discreet leadership and comes as the second stage. People *en masse* rally best around a specific cause, and once aroused can function effectively only if assigned definite tasks leading toward the clear-cut goal. Intelligent citizens, once convinced, seek rather than resent regimentation under confidence-inspiring direction. The organization must remain malleable and retain the urgency of its appeal.

Existing groups, habitually meeting for social or other purposes, may offer a better medium than a new and superimposed organization, for once persuaded of the need they operate along lines familiar to themselves; each speaks its own language whether it be a sewing circle or a secret order.

Utilization of these natural facilities adds the advantages of new and successive approaches to the problem at hand. In the long run of the Citizens' Committee of Washtenaw County a succession of persons and groups were involved; new waves came where others left off. Men and women functioned to secure better public health, rural and urban residents worked, Republicans and Democrats, ministers, doctors, lawyers, business men, teachers, nurses, farmers, and last and most numerous, the housewives.



# Blighted Areas Get a New Chance

*"New York law is an experiment with a new and hopeful method for treating the cancerous disease of blight."*

By **THOMAS C. DESMOND**

*Chairman, New York State Senate  
Committee on Affairs of Cities*

**B**LIGHT and decay in the central areas of American cities have now achieved the position and prestige of old familiar problems. We have been talking and reading about them with increasing frequency for some years. But only since the New York State legislature enacted the Desmond-Mitchell Urban Redevelopment Corporations Law and the Governor signed it on May 1, 1941, has a statewide, official attack on the problem anywhere been made. The New York law is an experiment with a new and hopeful method for treating the cancerous disease of blight. It is a method not for rehousing *slum dwellers* so much as for rehabilitating *slums*. It places new responsibilities and opportunities before municipalities.

The New York Urban Redevelopment Corporations Law is not self-operating. It is permissive legislation in that it merely authorizes each city to give a specific form of tax exemption to redevelopment corporations and to designate an agency to supervise their projects. The law does not require any community to take such action, but municipal officials will do well not to reject lightly the advantages which can be secured by encouraging private groups to undertake redevelopment projects in their slum areas. The powers and responsibilities of city

officers under this new law have considerable significance not only for those in New York State but also for those in cities throughout the country where the same problems of blight are causing local groups to study possible solutions.

The New York statute is an attempt to strike a balance between privileges and inducements granted to private capital to attract it to the new corporations on the one hand, and standards and restrictions necessary to insure that redevelopment projects will be of permanent benefit to the community on the other.

In order that those with funds available may wish to form redevelopment corporations and undertake projects, cities are authorized to enact local laws which will limit the taxes to be paid on the property of redevelopment corporations. The city can specify a period of years, not more than ten, during which taxes payable by the redevelopment corporation will be limited to the same amount as was payable at the time the property was acquired, thus in effect exempting from taxation any increase in value caused by the rebuilding and improvements of the corporation. Each city must decide for itself whether it will pass such an ordinance, and for what period of years. It will have to weigh the advantages of replacing slums

and obsolete, disease ridden, and often tax delinquent areas with new buildings against the possible cost of this limitation on tax revenues. Consideration must be given in this connection to the fact that the new corporations' acquisition of property will normally involve paying up all tax arrears.

Provisions have been placed in the new law to insure so far as possible that these corporations will be soundly financed and managed so as to be able to pay all future taxes when due.

#### Limited Dividends

The dividends which a redevelopment corporation may pay out during the period of tax exemption are limited to 5 per cent of the project's development cost. This provision, coupled with a requirement that a special reserve against increase in taxes at the end of the exemption period be set aside each year, will mean that the redevelopment corporation must be conservatively managed and cannot be operated on the sole basis of securing early speculative profits.

A second method for attracting capital to rehabilitation projects is included in the law. The new corporations are authorized to obtain land through power of condemnation. This is one of the basic points in the whole plan. One reason why there has been so little rebuilding of blighted areas in most cities is the fact that the typical block of slum property is divided up among a great many owners. A person or firm planning the sort of project which will be of real help in reviving

the neighborhood—one that is large enough in area not to be swamped in the sea of decay around it—must negotiate with many different owners, sometimes unwilling, sometimes out of town and almost impossible to locate, sometimes holding out for a wholly unrealistic price either through unwillingness to abandon long held hopes of increased value or through sheer profiteering because of their ability to stop the whole project if their terms are not met.

New York's new law recognizes the problem by its grant of condemnation powers. But it hedges the grant about to prevent abuse. A redevelopment corporation must acquire 51 per cent of the site proposed for its development—measured both by area and by assessed value—before it can use these powers. Moreover, a public hearing must be held by the local city planning officials before a development plan can be put into effect, and all those who consider their interests affected by the operations of the redevelopment corporation can make their opinions and complaints known. Considering these two factors it seems clear that high-handed or unwarranted use of this large power will be impossible.

As an alternative to condemnation proceedings by redevelopment corporations, the law permits cities themselves to condemn property and then turn it over to such corporations. Such procedure can be used, however, only when the redevelopment corporation so requests.

Balancing these special inducements to the promoters of rehabilitation projects are other provisions intended to insure that projects



stimulated by the law will be of real public benefit. Unless they improve the community and make a real contribution to the curbing of blight, they will not serve the purpose for which the law was enacted and for which tax exemption and power of condemnation are given. Our cities naturally want no more mushroom subdivisions built by speculators who take their profit quickly and leave the scene before their shoddy houses have time to fall apart. Back in the 20's New York State experimented with a plan of straight tax exemption of new homes without any form of control, and it is not likely to repeat the error.

#### **Planning Commission Approval**

No project can be started which is not approved by the city planning commission. As a preliminary step the planning commission must determine that certain parts of the city are, in the language of the law, "substandard or insanitary, so that the clearance, replanning, rehabilitation, or reconstruction thereof is necessary or advisable." Projects cannot be approved unless they lie within such an area. After that point has been covered, the city planning commission must then consider the details of the proposed development scheme as submitted by the redevelopment corporation.

The law requires that the plan submitted must cover a list of points considered essential if the community interest is to be protected, such as a list of existing buildings which it is proposed to demolish, to renovate, or to retain unaltered; a description of the proposed new buildings, their

size, type of construction, and proposed use; a statement of spaces which are to be left open as park, playground, or parking space; and a list of the number of existing dwelling units within the development, their rental, and the number of persons living in them, to be compared with a description of the new housing which is to be provided, rent levels in the new housing, etc.

The planning commission is charged with another important responsibility, which was placed in the law only after much discussion and at the urging of important civic groups. It must determine, before approving a development plan, that there will be available, for occupation by any families living on the site, housing which meets all legal requirements and which rents at a "substantially similar" figure to that which the families have been paying. Such housing may continue to be available within the development area or may be outside it, but in either case the planning commission must be satisfied that no family will be forced to move out without alternative accommodations.

These requirements seem reasonable and necessary when it is recalled that present conditions of blight and decay have been caused, at least in large part, by poor planning and failure to consider future needs and changes. For the same reason it is important that city planning be strengthened in those many communities where it is even now treated as a stepchild of municipal government. Whether slums are to be rebuilt under a statute like New York's Urban Redevelopment Corporations

Law requiring action by city planning officials, or whether the ordinary processes of unaided private enterprise do the job, permanent benefit to our communities cannot be secured except as new building and rehabilitation are guided by long-range planning.

### Supervising Agency

A further measure of control over redevelopment corporations is provided by the law's requirement that they be subject to a "supervising agency." This agency is to be "the official, bureau, commission, or agency appointed, established, or designated by the local legislative body." In New York City the Board of Estimate is specified to act as supervising agency.

The agency must approve the development plan on such points as the probability that the corporation will be able to finance or arrange to finance its proposed scheme and the quality of management personnel which the corporation has designated for its first year. It is required to approve changes in the development plan, all sales and transfers of real property or mortgages placed on it, leases of an entire building or improvement by the corporation to a single person or corporation to prevent the purposes of the act from being evaded, and arrangements made in case of future dissolution or reorganization. It has general supervision over the corporation's use of its powers of condemnation, and, through financial reports and information which it is authorized to require at semi-annual intervals, over the general financial operations

of the corporation including its observance of the restriction upon dividends and of the reserve requirements. In general, the supervising agency oversees that part of the redevelopment corporation's operations which are not in the field of city planning.

City officials, it is clear, must assume a considerable amount of responsibility if and when a group comes forward in any community with plans for forming a redevelopment corporation. The actual formation of such an organization is not, of course, in the hands of the city. Moreover, once it has been chartered by the state, the redevelopment corporation automatically obtains the power of condemnation. But no actual operations can take place without the support and participation of the municipality. In the first place, it is almost a certainty that no projects will be built unless the city in question grants the tax limitation permitted by the law. Moreover, building cannot start until a project has been approved by a city planning commission and a supervising agency. Cities without planning commissions must do without redevelopment projects until planning bodies are set up. Each city must take action to designate a supervising agency, since only in the case of New York City is one defined in the law.

These will prove weighty decisions and responsibilities as the time approaches when specific proposals for redevelopment projects are made. Cities will do well to acquaint themselves with the provisions of the law,

(Continued on Page 640)



# Citizen Groups in Review (Part II)

*"The trophy rooms of citizen groups contain not only evidence of constructive reforms won and of harmful proposals defeated, but additional medallions for significant modernizations."*

By HOWARD M. KLINE  
*University of Maryland*

EDITOR'S NOTE.—This is the second and last installment of a comprehensive article on citizen organization. The first installment appeared in the October issue of the REVIEW.

THE list of local problems which the National Municipal League says that a citizens organization "may profitably investigate and bring to public attention" is synonymous with what the textbooks on local government call modern administrative practice. This list includes the merit system, council-manager plan, budget methods, administrative management of indebtedness, integration and coordination of governments in a metropolitan area, scientific assessment, centralized purchasing, proportional representation, adequate city planning, scientific trial procedure, bail system, jury system, probation and parole and pardon, reorganization of prison and correctional systems, recreation programs, health and sanitation, housing, relief administration, citizenship training in schools, child welfare.

What of tax reductions, measures to conciliate business, picketing and handbill ordinances, vice drives, new public buildings, spot zoning, tax exemptions, traffic regulations, new schools and equipment, improved street pavings and sewer extensions, liquor licensing policies, better bus and street car services—the matters

which, the country over, scores of citizens groups are seeking to wrest from their city officials?

The League's is a list of important local government reforms toward which citizens groups *ought* to be working: the other emphasizes what they are actually doing. The latter may be short-sighted and immediate issues as distinguished from more basic and long-range objectives, but they are the ones on which many citizens groups are spending their full energies and funds today.

This situation has led Mr. James L. Baldwin to criticize contemporary citizens groups because their motivation is symptomatic rather than fundamental. After discussing the work of a particular local group which he describes as the oldest citizens group in the United States, Mr. Baldwin says:

This worthy group has accomplished some notable local reform or betterment every year or two since its founding. Nevertheless, their city remains one of the most viciously and wastefully mismanaged in the country. All the piecemeal savings achieved by the above long-laboring civic group are swallowed up in new forms of extravagance and corruption. . . . If half the effort of the above group had been expended to modernize its local government and make it responsive to the public will, most of the evils it has fought would have

been automatically eliminated, and other reforms would be vastly facilitated.

### Similarities Among Groups

Despite the huge variety of organizations which take a more or less active interest in local government problems, there are some important points of similarity and some important points of difference which are fundamental to efforts to correlate the various organizations into a central citizens council or federation.

As to the similarities: *First*, all local citizens groups are devoted to the same general causes, namely, good government, promotion of good (or more effective) citizenship, more intelligent and effective citizen participation, economy without the sacrifice of essential services.

*Second*, local citizens groups are predicated upon the existence of a political machine of some kind which is either bad, and thus needs reform, or is in danger of backsliding, and thus needs reassurance.

*Third*, many citizens organizations are of the single-purpose variety, that is, they spring up to secure, or to defeat, some pending issue such as municipal ownership, charter revision, excessive expenditure, and the like. Once that issue is settled the group is faced with the necessity of broadening its program or of folding up.<sup>1</sup>

*Fourth*, by contrast, many other

citizens groups find common ground in the fact that their programs are very broad and are spread thin, so that a substantial showing in behalf of any part is difficult, and enthusiasm fizzles out for this reason. The president of so formidable a national organization as the League of Women Voters felt the danger of "too much program" so great that she devoted a substantial portion of an address<sup>2</sup> to cautioning against it.

*Fifth*, though a matter of opinion, it is often true that the leadership of citizens groups is more earnest and sincere than imaginative and resourceful. One writer has said it is a case of the blind leading the blind! Merely because a prominent citizen is whole-heartedly devoted to the cause of government improvements and has given generously of both his time and funds, it does not follow that his leadership is adequate to the task in hand. A full-time professional secretariat has become standard equipment with many of the larger and wealthier groups but, where none exists, the president or appropriate committee chairmen must perform the duties usually associated with the secretaryship.

*Sixth*, with or without a paid secretary, citizens groups almost universally complain of the lack of adequate financial support. Dues from members and contributions from a mere handful of citizens form the war chest for most citizens groups: all have the common problem of finance.

*Seventh*, in the main membership

<sup>1</sup>Indeed, one criticism of citizens groups is that they are held together by programs of only momentary significance and, after the moment is passed, interest dies out and the organization collapses. This is especially true of organizations raised for housecleaning at city hall.

<sup>2</sup>See *A Portrait of the League of Women Voters*, National League of Women Voters, Washington, D. C., page 10.



is drawn from the middle class and, as among members of the middle class, principally from business and professional men. A classification of the members of such groups as taxpayers leagues, chambers of commerce, voters leagues, women's clubs, luncheon clubs, and civic clubs, for example, indicates that the middle class dominates both in the total number of memberships and, what is more important, in the leadership positions. An analysis of 1,300 members of one of the largest civic clubs in the east shows that over half its total number come from the ranks of attorneys, manufacturers and merchants, bankers, insurance and investment brokers, educators, physicians, and engineers. The essential characteristics of this club have not changed during at least twenty years.

#### Differences Among Groups

The important differences, or dissimilarities, among citizens groups arise from the fact that most of these organizations were founded to work toward a series of fairly narrow objectives, only a few of which touch local government reform or involve contacts with local government problems only incidentally. For example, perhaps the most universal form of citizens groups is the neighborhood improvement association. Primarily these associations are seeking additional advantages for their limited community in the form of schools, sewers, bus service, zoning protection, and whatnot. They wait upon the public officials at city hall or their own councilman from time to time, but their concern with the broad objectives previously noted is

casual. A similar situation obtains in the case of many other organizations such as the chamber of commerce, taxpayers association, voters league.

Thus the *first* dissimilarity is the fact that many citizens groups are active in behalf of a number of objectives only a few of which include local reform.

This basic difference of objective, if only one of emphasis, suggests a *second* important difference, namely, that some groups are pledged to programs which are in direct opposition to those sought by other citizens groups. For example, chambers of commerce and taxpayers associations are, in general, dedicated to tax reduction (or at least to prevention of tax increases), whereas the parent-teachers associations, women's clubs, social and child welfare agencies, municipal employees unions, planning associations, and neighborhood improvement associations are squared off for further expenditure in behalf of their particular interest, or at least for the maintenance of present appropriations. That these competing demands may be easily resolved by a citizens council, if one exists, is a soothing thought, if not an altogether practical one; such cases have more often resulted in the citizens council taking no action at all or in deferring recommendation. The practical difficulties presented by these inter-tribal conflicts are in part diffused, however, by the fact that many of the community leaders in business and in the professions belong to several citizens groups and open internecine opposition may be avoided through their influence.

A *third* important difference among citizens groups relates to the differences in method of carrying out programs. If citizens groups agree on general civic objectives, they differ widely in how far they will go and by what methods they will proceed. Given a specific public issue, the following methods of procedure are apparent, bearing in mind that some groups use one, some another, and some use several in combination: (1) holding public or semi-public meetings to hear advocates and opponents; (2) calling upon public officials to find out the official point of view; (3) appointing a special committee, or directing a standing committee, to consider and report to the whole membership; (4) discussing, adopting, and forwarding resolutions urging a specific course of action; (5) publishing of findings, conclusions, and recommendations in group's own publication or in public press; (6) appearing before officials publicly or privately to urge specific course; (7) applying sundry forms of more outright pressure, such as actively campaigning for proposed reforms, seeking the support of other citizens groups, appealing to political leaders for concessions, or, in pressure terminology, "building home fires" behind elected officials; (8) waging an active campaign for the group's own slate of candidates.

Some of these methods overlap and no one of them describes fully the work of all citizens groups. The range of activity is sufficiently well represented, however, to impress the fact that there is not a standard pattern of procedure. Whether the particular method(s) followed by any

given group was dictated by its own previous experience, the experience of like groups in other communities, the result of carefully laid plans, the wishes of some dominant personality, or mere happenstance, is not clear.

### Conclusions

The citizens group is a wholesome democratic institution, for the accomplishment of democratically-determined objectives, by democratic means, for the benefit of the local democracy. The history of every hamlet and metropolis alike contains instances of beneficial legislation promoted, harmful legislation prevented, and administrative practice improved by local citizens organizations.

Every citizens group has a prospectus of some kind and the self-portrait painted there often fails to recount defeats and disappointments. But the significant thing is that there have been victories.

Many citizens organizations, handicapped by the lack of brilliant leadership and adequate funds and publicity, are still chasing rainbows. They have enthusiastically formulated programs which are impossible of fulfillment in this generation. In a few instances civic directors have considered their prime function to be one of constant irritation to public officials. That their attacks on party leaders and the administration are blatant and unremitting is not so much a measure of their alertness as of their lack of finesse and studied tactic. Fortunately, the citizens group movement enjoys only a few such cases.

The fact-finding or research organizations point to the number and intensity of their researches, but it



is difficult to secure any measure of their use. Someone has said that the municipal wastebaskets across the country are full of good research. Nevertheless, those same studies have unquestionably provided data upon which hosts of other groups have been able to hang up a victory. There exists today a nice controversy among professional research men on the very question of whether research includes fact-finding and interpretation alone or whether it includes also the not-too-black arts of propaganda and pressure with which the conclusions of those researches are put into practical operation. Regardless of the controversy, the elemental facts constitute the only reliable basis upon which citizens groups can proceed and whatever group turns up the ammunition renders therewith an important service.

Many of the accomplishments of citizens groups are negative in that many of their most spectacular victories have been preventive. The specific issues involved are as diverse as the subject matter of local government. There is no way of discovering how many unwise measures were conceived but remained undelivered because of the vigilance of citizens groups.

On the positive side, it is not too much to say that local citizens groups have been instrumental in every important legislative and administrative improvement made in at least our larger cities during the last decade. (In some cities the period extends farther than ten years.) The word "instrumental" is used advisedly because the influences

in public opinion are subtle and it requires a confident man to claim full credit and responsibility. None the less, fundamental civic reforms do not "just happen" and one searches the country in vain to find instances of the adoption of the manager plan, for example, where one or more citizens groups did not play a prominent rôle.

The trophy rooms of citizens groups contain not only evidences of constructive reforms won and of harmful proposals defeated, but also additional medallions for significant modernizations. An out-of-date law or an ancient administrative method is almost as bad as none at all. Election codes, financial and book-keeping systems, records and forms, for example, have a tendency to remain unchanged and become inadequate, once established. Citizens groups have more than once advertised such a situation to the point of correction.

In addition to the many tangible accomplishments there always remain an unknown quantity of intangibles. The present science of government knows no devices which measure such tributes to the citizens group movement as the general improvement in the temper and tone of civic interest, the closer affinity and increased respect of the citizen for his official servants, the better appreciation by the citizen of the multiplicity and complexity of local problems, the increased respect of officialdom toward citizens with both information and perspective. Observers agree that these tendencies exist and that local citizens groups are at least partially responsible.

# Democracy Is for Fighting Men

By WILLIAM McCLEERY  
Sunday Editor, PM

YOU will never read about this in your history books because it never happened, but one evening just after Cornwallis surrendered to General Washington a widely assorted group of "Americans" met in a big smoke-filled room and sat down around a table.

It had to be a very long table because there were many men present and some of them didn't like each other too well and didn't want to sit too close to each other. As a group they must have been fairly influential because many of their ideas finally got into the constitution. Other ideas were rejected at first and written in later. Others are still pending.

## Something to Ponder

They saw that a new country was about to be started, and they pondered the following question:

"How can we build a country that will never grow flabby and decadent, but will always be young and vigorous and dynamic?"

They agreed that a nation takes its character from the men who populate it—and they believed that only if America were populated by fighting men could it remain forever young and vigorous and dynamic.

One citizen said that, if America were constantly fighting foreign wars, that would assure a high percentage of fighting men among its people, but another citizen, who had done some thinking, replied as follows:

"You can't keep fighting foreign wars

forever. Eventually you either get licked, or you lick everybody else, or you get into a stalemate. In any one of those eventualities the fighting stops, and flabbiness and decadence set in. We want to provide for our people a kind of fighting that will go on forever."

"We could persecute people," suggested a horse-faced citizen with long gray hair. "We could persecute Jews and Negroes and bald-headed men and bow-legged women. This would give our fighting men something to do. Keep them alive on their feet."

## Not the Same

The first citizen shook his head and said, "Bullying is not the same as fighting. Bullying doesn't keep you on your toes. You have to pick on somebody your own size."

"I think the first thing we must decide," he went on, "is what kind of weapons fighting men can use that will gratify their love of conflict, win them something they desire, give expression to their cussedness—and still not put an end to future fighting."

This was agreed upon as the important objective and they went to work on it.

They ruled out knives and clubs and other lethal weapons because they saw that if you kill off your opponent you can't fight him anymore.

Somebody suggested that loud and violent *talking* was one effective way for a fighting man to work off steam and keep himself awake and cause considerable anguish to his opponent. The horse-faced man objected to this on the ground that it was bad for a man to speak ill of his brothers.

"Look," they told him. "We are not trying to start a new religion. We are trying to design a house in which fight-

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EDITOR'S NOTE.—We are reprinting this article because it appeals to us as a fresh and original treatment of an essential part of the democratic concept which is too often forgotten. It appeared first in *PM's Weekly*, published in New York, Sunday, August 24, 1941.



ing men can live and fight without tearing the house down. We are not saying what it is a man should fight for. We believe that men are essentially good and that if allowed to fight with the right kind of weapons they will fight for good things. You evidently think men are essentially bad and should be kept in chains. You may be right but you are outnumbered."

The horse-faced one said O. K., he would go along on letting people talk freely about each other, but certainly not about the government.

This was shouted down at once because everybody else felt that talking against the government was even more fun than talking against your fellow man.

"All right," said the horse-faced one. "But you can't *write* that kind of stuff."

"Listen," said another. "You seem to forget that our idea is to see how *many* weapons we can put in the hands of our fighting countrymen—not how *few*. We are ruling out only those weapons which would put an end to the fighting."

A business man then spoke up.

"So far," he said, "you have taken damned good care of the literary people—the orators and the writers. What about me? I can't talk very well and I can't write very well. How do I fight?"

### For Accommodation

To accommodate this man and all like him the group decided that merchants and business men could fight among themselves—cutting each other's throats figuratively but not literally, driving one another out of business, having a whale of a time.

"Of course," said the first citizen, "we want this fighting, too, to go on forever. *So we can't allow any one business to get so big or so powerful that the fighting stops.*"

"There—ah—will be, I assume," said the business man, "no fighting between

employer and employee."

"No?" said Citizen No. 1. "Why not?"

"Well," said the business man, "it makes for conflict, and. . ."

"Conflict is what we're aiming to provide," he was told.

"Yes, but it's inefficient," said the business man.

"We're not trying to lay out the most efficient country possible," said Citizen No. 1, "but a country in which men will forever remain alive because there is so much fighting to do."

"I think," said the horse-faced one, "that the government should always be on the side of—"

"No," interrupted the first citizen, "the government will not *always* be on the side of any one group, unless you consider the under-dog to be a group. It's inevitable that at times one side may get so far ahead in the fight that fighting will get pretty tame. In such cases, the government ought to side with the under-dog to get the fight going again."

### A Favored Few

Then they agreed that one side, having won a victory, must not take any of the weapons out of circulation. (What we now think of as the Bill of Rights was, at this point, merely a guarantee that talking and writing and assembling and such things were inalienable weapons of fighting men who wanted the fighting to go on forever.)

The horse-faced one, now thoroughly unpopular, suggested that only certain people be allowed to use the weapons; only persons owning so much land or people of such-and-such ancestry or faith.

That, he said, would keep the fighting on a more genteel plane.

Very loudly and very patiently they explained to him that genteel fighting was not what they were looking or planning for. They wanted good, hard

fighting—and the best and hardest fighters might be born rich or poor or Jew or Gentile or black or white. Everybody should have a chance to fight. (As I said before, not *all* of the ideas proposed by this particular group were embodied in the constitution or practiced in the country's early days.)

It was agreed that no group of people in this fighting-man's country should ever be allowed to grow too weak from hunger or sickness or hopelessness to fight with the prescribed weapons.

They also recognized that a man had to be able to worship God as he pleased. As one citizen put it, "The most spirited men will be the best fighters in this nation of fighting men—and will have the most trouble with their spirits. If they need religion to keep themselves in fighting trim, they will have it."

One man who had been silent finally said, "I personally want peace and contentment and not all this fighting forever."

"It is your right," said the first citizen, "to fight for peace and contentment."

The silent citizen thought for a moment and then nodded his head. "O. K.," he said.

"Well," the horse-faced citizen said, "what happens if, while Americans are learning to fight with these new non-lethal weapons, some other nation concentrates on getting more adept with their lethal weapons? We lose our skill at killing and they increase theirs. They attack us—and then what?"

This is what they told him:

"It will take our fighting men a long time to become handy with their new weapons, but it never takes long for a good fighting man to learn how to kill.

"At first, if anybody ever threatens us, we will fight like hell among ourselves—with our talking and writing and public assembling—over whether we really *are* threatened. Once we get

a yes decision in *that* fight, it will take us hardly any time at all to re-learn the art of killing. When that stupid temporary fighting is over we will get back to our own brand of permanent fighting. And maybe some day the whole world will see the value of fighting—not temporarily, in wars, against strangers—but permanently, in democracy, among people you know. It could be."

### BLIGHTED AREAS

(Continued from Page 632)

as well as with the blight and slums within their borders.

New York State communities may be called upon at any time to decide upon a proposal for rebuilding part of their blighted sections under this new law, and if they are not ready to facilitate the operations of any redevelopment corporation which comes forward with a sound plan, they will be guilty of obstructing efforts to cure one of the most serious problems which cities face. If New York proves successful in its approach to the problem of blight, other states will copy the plan.<sup>1</sup>

The disease of blight will not be cured by talking about it. It is still continuing to spread. We have passed the stage for further refining the diagnosis, and in New York State we have set up a method of treatment. In a sense New York will serve as an experimental laboratory for the rest of the country. Only the future will show whether we have the foresight and enterprise to use the remedy and to save our cities from the fatal plague of blight.

<sup>1</sup>See also NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW for July 1941, p. 435, and for September 1941, p. 540.



# Contributors in Review

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**A** HUSBAND who is an authority on county government and a wife active in community social service joined hands to produce *Playing Politics with Public Health*. **Arthur W. Bromage** is professor of political science at the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor and is the author of *American County Government* and *State Government and Administration in the United States*, and co-author with Thomas H. Reed of *Organization and Cost of County and Township Government*. **Mary Cogan Bromage** started as an assistant in the department of English at the University of Michigan and a reader on the *Early Modern English Dictionary*, but later branched out into such activities as vice-presidency of the Ann Arbor Public Health Nursing Association, membership on the Citizens Committee on County Health, and vice-presidency of the Ann Arbor Community Fund.

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**R**EBUILDING of blighted areas is a problem with which **Thomas C. Desmond** (*Blighted Areas Get a New Chance*) has had much to do, in a variety of capacities, ever since, during the last war, he headed a firm which built housing for shipyard workers in Newburgh, New York. During the 1920's he was identified with the building of such housing projects as those at Sunnyside, Queens, L. I., and Radburn, New Jersey, both in the New York area. As New York State Senator since his retirement from business in 1930, Mr. Desmond was one of the sponsors of the New York State Public Housing Law of 1939, as well as of the Urban Redevelopment Corporations Law which is the subject of the present article.

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**N**O MAJOR additions to his life story have developed since last month, reports **Howard M. Kline** (*Citizen Groups in Review—Part II*). For details as of four weeks ago, readers are therefore referred to the October issue of the REVIEW, which carried installment No. 1 of Mr. Kline's current article.

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**William McCleery** (*Democracy Is for Fighting Men*) takes his dynamic approach to democratic processes straight from his own observations as editor and writer for the past ten years in New York and Washington, D. C. He is former executive editor of the Associated Press Feature Service, member of the editorial staff of *Life* magazine, and is now Sunday editor and picture editor of New York City's newspaper *PM*.

# Researcher's Digest: November

*A Far West edition featuring the fourth annual WGRA convention, California defense publications, case load experiments in the California State Relief Administration, Oregon findings on parking meters and housing, Washington libraries.*

**A** RECORD number of researchers—125 strong—participated in the fourth annual convention of the **Western Governmental Research Association**, held in Sacramento, California, on October 23, 24, and 25. Highlights of the meeting were an exhibit of research reports produced by Pacific area governmental agencies, a come-in-and-see-what-we're-doing tour of state departments, a round of three-minute oral accounts of their year's work by some thirty-five different research organizations, and a repeat performance of last year's popular "Information Please" session.

Over 250 reports contributed by approximately forty agencies comprised the reporting display. Each agency was asked to submit material considered to be typical of its work. Accompanying every pamphlet and book was a statement of costs of production, types of distribution, typography, and special features.

On their afternoon open house tours the researchers visited the State Department of Employment, featuring inspection of the second largest machine tabulation installation west of Chicago, the State Printing Plant, the Department of Motor Vehicles with its "chamber of horrors," the Department of Public Works, the California State Library, and the Governor's office.

Panel sessions dealt with problems of administrative research, the sampling technique, research in probable post-emergency conditions and needs, and effective research reporting. Most of these topics grew out of problems raised at last year's convention.

Two luncheon sessions heard Samuel Moment of the Market Development Section, Bonneville Power Administration, speaking on past and future research in the field of northwest resources, and Richard Graves, executive director of the California State Council of Defense, who called upon researchers to turn from "introspective" research to research upon pressing defense problems of the present and future. The banquet speaker was Dr. Charles-Edward A. Winslow, Yale University professor now serving as visiting lecturer in the public social services at the University of California. His topic: "Our Objectives in Post War Reconstruction."

Frank M. Stewart, director of the Bureau of Governmental Research, University of California at Los Angeles, was elected president of the WGRA for 1941-42.

## ***California Is for Defense***

Burgeoning also with defense publications is the Far West. A new one is *Organizing for Defense*, A Manual for the Cities and Counties of California, prepared by the **California State Council of Defense** and containing that comparatively rare thing, a description of all defense agencies—federal, state (California), and local—with a discussion of their inter-relationship. The California State Council of Defense is also responsible for a biweekly mimeographed *California Defense Digest*, now in its sixth issue, which reports defense news of interest in California and summarizes significant defense publications and articles. Another new defense

pamphlet which should be of nationwide usefulness is *Official Defense Publications*, edited by Jerome K. Wilcox for the **Bureau of Public Administration of the University of California**. Organized in two parts—state publications and federal publications—the checklist covers the period from June 1940 to August 1, 1941. The publications of all the states are included in some 106 pages of listings.

### ***Small Loads Save Money***

The **Bureau of Public Administration of the University of California** is responsible also for the long awaited account of measurement experiments in the field of public welfare: *Determining Work Loads for Professional Staff in a Public Welfare Agency*, by Herbert A. Simon, William R. Divine, E. Myles Cooper, and Milton Chernin. The study grew out of the joint efforts of the Bureau of Public Administration, which is conducting a comprehensive three-year program of administrative measurement studies, and the desire of the Division of Planning and Research of the California State Relief Administration to measure its own efficiency as an agency whose purpose was to establish eligibility for public relief and periodically to check that eligibility.

Actual experimentation with case loads of different sizes was done by the four investigators, and the findings are based on the activities of seventy-two professional workers who, during the period of the experiment, handled 2,771 applications and 7,346 active cases. Their work was evaluated by means of an estimate of the effect upon expenditures of increased accuracy in eligibility determination, and an estimate of the adequacy with which the clients' needs for service referrals were met.

Findings of the study underlined the often expressed but hitherto untested

belief that low case loads make for both savings and efficiency. "In the case of qualifiers and carrier workers, the improved performance which accompanied the lowest loads tested (fifty applications per week and sixty active cases, respectively) was sufficient to justify the increased operating cost. In the case of field intake workers there was no marked improvement in performance with lower loads, and the findings did not justify a quota of less than sixteen applications per week."

(An ironic footnote to this story is that shortly after completion of the experiments the state legislature abolished the State Relief Administration and turned relief back to the counties.)

### ***Researching in the Northwest***

To move further north on the Pacific coast, research blossoms substantially in Oregon and Washington too. The **Bureau of Municipal Research and Service of the University of Oregon**, co-operating with the **League of Oregon Cities**, has two new reports on *Parking Meters* (with special reference to their operation in three Oregon cities) and *A Survey of Housing Authorities in Thirty-Three Cities*. Parking meters in the three cities have brought beneficial results, it is reported; likewise, thirty-two of the thirty-three cities surveyed throughout the country returned questionnaires which expressed the belief that their housing programs are worthwhile.

Washington's newest contribution is a pamphlet called *Serving the Unserved*, dealing with problems connected with extending library service to those now unserved. It is a summary of the proceedings of the library section meetings sponsored by the Washington Library Association at the Institute of Government, University of Washington, in June. Publisher is the **Bureau of**

(Continued on Page 665)



# National Defense and the Cities

*Pamphlet explains effective air raid warning system; educators organize for protection of schools and pupils; fire defense committees.*

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By DANIEL W. HOAN  
*Consultant, Office of Civilian Defense*

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A comprehensive pamphlet entitled *Air Raid Warning System*, prepared by the War Department under the supervision of the Chief Signal Officer, U. S. Army, with suggestions of the National Technological Civil Protection Committee, has been issued by the Office of Civilian Defense.

The foreword to the pamphlet declares:

"The effectiveness of the entire scheme of civilian defense depends largely upon the effective organization and functioning of the civilian air raid warning system.

"An understanding of how, when, and where the military aircraft warning service is coördinated with the civilian air raid warning system and of how the latter functions with the whole scheme of civilian defense is essential to the successful organization and operation of any of these defense agencies.

"The data and information contained herein are based upon the latest and most authoritative information available upon the date of publication, and are intended as helpful suggestions, many of which may be modified and adapted to each local situation and to specific installations. However, care must be taken to be certain that no modification of essential procedure is introduced.

"In no sense should issuance of this pamphlet be construed as a signal to start work immediately upon installations. Using the material in this pamphlet as a guide, studies of existing

installations and plans for extending or adapting them can be initiated by responsible agencies. The Office of Civilian Defense will announce when the actual installations should be made."

The pamphlet contains five chapters under the following heads: General, The Military Aircraft Warning Service, The Civilian Air Raid Warning System, Public Warning Systems, and Training. Under the subheading "Purpose" the first chapter declares:

"This pamphlet is furnished primarily as a guide to aid local civilian defense organizations in the proper and efficient discharge of their duties with the air raid warning service in the event of air raids, and its purpose is twofold:

- a. To furnish a set of instructions to local civilian defense organizations for the installation and operation of a civilian air raid warning system;
- b. To explain how the civilian air raid warning system will be co-ordinated with the military aircraft warning service."

The pamphlet is complete with charts and maps describing telephone and communication systems, as well as organizations of the various civil, official, and military divisions. It also includes specimens of forms to be utilized throughout the service. The pamphlet was distributed to the governors of the states and subsequently will be available to local defense councils through their respective state defense councils.

### ***Protection of Schools and Pupils Planned***

Methods to protect the lives of elementary and high school pupils and school properties were recently adopted by a committee of public, parochial and other private school administrators, meeting as a committee under the auspices of the Office of Civilian Defense.

James Marshall, president of the New York City Board of Education, chairman of the committee, said that the committee felt its first obligation was to create a nation-wide consciousness of the importance of protecting the lives of the nation's school children in an emergency.

"School administrators always have been prepared to protect children from such dangers as fire hazards," Chairman Marshall said. "We have met here to consider ways and means of protecting children from other hazards which might affect our city."

Mr. Marshall said the committee studied methods of organizations for such protection locally as well as nationally and with relation to all defense councils and agencies.

An official statement of the committee said: "We cannot wait until catastrophe strikes to make our plans. At least there are many phases of the program of preparedness that can be and must be made in advance if they are to be made at all. The personnel of school staffs must be organized to perform their respective functions. Some must be given special technical training, such as first aid; that requires months. Buildings must be equipped

with special apparatus and materials to deal with bombs and their effects. Unusual means of communication with and between the parts of the school system must be established. Centralized organization and control must, in certain respects, give way to decentralization. Children and those in charge of them must acquire new habits and abilities necessary in this new kind of emergency—old fire drills are not enough. Plans must be made for children to reach their homes or to stay in school under unusual time and space conditions. School buildings must be studied and charted to determine their usable parts and facilities in case of emergency."

The committee's final report, which will go into detail as to methods of special training and organization of teachers and school personnel, will be available shortly for distribution.

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### ***Fire Defense Committees Active***

Subcommittees of the Advisory Committee on Civilian Fire Defense recently named by Mayor F. H. LaGuardia, director of the Office of Civilian Defense, are engaged in the preparation of a national civilian fire defense program. In addition to the study of fire prevention and protection, the committee will study such questions as procurement, production, and maintenance of auxiliary fire fighting apparatus.

George W. Booth, chief engineer of the National Board of Fire Underwriters, was elected chairman of the committee, and William T. French, liaison officer, Office of Civilian Defense, secretary.

# Letters to the Editor

## *A Plea for Realism on the Defense Issue*

To the Editor of the NATIONAL  
MUNICIPAL REVIEW:

Professor Mosher's article in the September NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW pointed out that local defense councils could find a "man-sized job worthy of their mettle" if they turned their attention to the inefficiency and cost of local government. "Slackness, wastes and inefficiencies should not be tolerated . . . under the pressures of national defense."

I think that Dr. Mosher might have added that concentration at this time on creating auxiliary fire services and air raid services, on designing costumes—functional yet zippy, in short, on plans which rest on the assumption of an early attack on the United States, are wasted effort and perhaps even dangerous to morale. There will be time enough for this sort of thing and for preparation against actual attack when competent military authorities are thinking of "invasion" and "air raids" as physical threats instead of games for the training of men.

I fear that emphasis at this time on enrollment of defense wardens of one type or another will, in the future, ruin civilian morale instead of raising it. The college football coach knows how difficult it is to bring a "stale" team back to a fighting pitch. Civilian defense groups may likewise grow stale. *Life* magazine concluded that one important contributing factor to low army morale was the lack of plan as to just what the men were being prepared for. Mayor La Guardia recently issued an order compelling all municipal employees under thirty-five years of age to report for training in some civilian defense activity. When such activities are based on the assumption that at-

tack is imminent—and military authorities think it is not—they not only lower morale but have a tendency to make the public take its eye off the ball—which at the moment continues to be aid to the "democracies."

An article in *Army Ordnance* of October 1941, by a member of the General Staff Corps, says that invasion across the sea in the face of land-based air power is no longer in the book of possibilities. When the majority of our people are convinced that invasion and air raids are in the realm of possibility, there will be no difficulty with morale. The regular police and fire services can and should make their plans toward organizing the public if and when danger threatens.

In the meantime, let us be realistic, as Professor Mosher is, about the jobs that face local defense councils. They can better direct their efforts toward making our democracy efficient and effective in the field of local government.

CARL MARCY

The College of the City of New York

## *We Stand Corrected*

To the Editor of the NATIONAL  
MUNICIPAL REVIEW:

Correction, please!

Stanley High, October REVIEW, page 562: "Business men, through the Chamber of Commerce and in a number of independent organizations, put the microscope on the city's finances."

True, the Chamber of Commerce was one of five or six participating organizations represented on the Citizens Audit Committee. But this came only after—grew out of the fact that—the Civic Research Institute, *alone, unaided*, and substantially unencouraged, stepped out and mortgaged itself and its future to the point of actually engaging auditors



to conduct an independent audit of the city; fought the proposal of the city administration that they would hire their own auditors, run their own audit; agreed to withhold its independent audit and avoid a duplication *only* on condition that a representative, independent citizen audit committee be created to have entire control over hiring of auditors. This proposal was, in turn, accepted by the city administration on the condition that the auditors so engaged *not* be those retained by the institute. From these facts was created the Audit Committee of which the Chamber of Commerce was *one* of the constituent organizations.

Another point cannot, perhaps, be challenged as a correction to be noted—being within the rights of each author. Yet, many Kansas Citians to whom the last ten years still are vivid memories, who are wondering from what source similar unquestioned leadership can be expected in the future, certainly would note the fact that among the garlands strewn was a gaping omission—Hal W. Luhnnow. I believe the simplest test check proce-

dure would establish the fact that there—and there alone—rests prime credit for the events in Kansas City; that this was the constant energy, the refusal to quit, the tone of evangelicism or idealism that won the confidence to bring success. Particularly is this omission deemed significant because of the significance of the event itself. Hal Luhnnow heads the corporation bearing the name of the community's most outstanding philanthropist—but a corporation in which Kansas City represents a relatively small share. Luhnnow himself has been a member of the community a comparatively few years—might logically be expected to have far less community obligation and responsibility than many other "community leaders" who had been content to sit placidly by, if not actively acquiesce in conditions.

Perhaps Kansas City would have its chin up without Luhnnow—but I doubt it from all I've heard from a wide variety of witnesses.

LOREN B. MILLER, *Director*  
Civic Research Institute  
Kansas City, Missouri

### LEAGUE'S BUSINESS

(Continued from Page 618)

National Municipal League. While individual members of the committee have been responsible for the preparation of the various articles of the *Constitution* and of the accompanying explanatory discussions, the entire committee and many specialists in various fields have coöperated actively. The *Constitution*, which for two decades has had marked influence on thinking in the field of state constitutional law and the relation of states with local government, provides for a unicameral legislature, legislative council and continuous legislative process, improved legislative procedure, administrative responsibility, an administrative manager, unification of the judiciary, new financial controls, stronger civil service, flexible welfare provisions, elimination of barriers to intergovernmental relations, and self-executing provisions for constitutional amendment.

HOWARD P. JONES, *Secretary*

# News in Review

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## City, State, Nation

*Edited by H. M. Olmsted*

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### Santiago Conference Fosters Inter-American Understanding

***Merit system, planning,  
budgeting, accounting  
among matters discussed***

**T**HE Second Inter-American Congress of Municipalities, which met in Santiago and Valparaiso, Chile, September 15-21, adopted some thirty-eight resolutions, recommendations, etc., covering a wide range of municipal interests.

The recommendations of the first congress, which met in Havana, Cuba, in 1938, were reaffirmed. Among fundamental matters affirmatively covered were municipal autonomy, universal suffrage, appointments to the public service based on merit and protected by tenure, civic education and administrative research, and encouragement of democratic principles and practices.

Uniform budgeting and accounting systems were recommended, and the Pan-American Commission on Inter-municipal Coöperation was asked to compile municipal statistical information on budgets and public services, both publicly and privately owned or operated. Establishment of mixed economic enterprises was favored as a transitional phase in the rendition of public services. Coördination of local and regional planning, recognition of community social influences, and popular education as to urban planning were recommended.

The Congress unanimously adopted a program for municipal coöperation in promoting Inter-American friend-

ship. The following recommendations were included:

Exchange of municipal officials among the Americas;

City officials to suggest to news papers that they exchange writers among the Americas;

Designation by cities of certain of their municipal officials to facilitate visits and studies by persons from the other Americas;

Celebrate Pan-American Day (April 14) more enthusiastically in all of the municipalities of the Americas;

Encourage freer education and popularization in each country of the history and institutions of all the Americas;

Encourage and teach the need for freer exchange of goods and of the products of labor of the masses among the Americas. Unless our common citizenry understand this necessity, lasting good will is hardly possible.

Hon. Daniel W. Hoan, formerly mayor of Milwaukee and now consultant to the Office of Civilian Defense president of the American delegation reported that "it was the unanimous feeling that the Congress has done a good deal to overcome the intensive work which has and still is being perpetrated by the Nazis, and that the Congress is likely to wield a fine influence in all future dealings in those countries."

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### Cities and Priorities

With increased scope and intensity of the national defense program cities as well as private industries are facing great difficulties in obtaining many materials and supplies; and basic municipal services, essential to the well being both of defense workers and the general public, are handicapped.

Early in October the Office of Pro-

duction Management established in its Division of Civilian Supply a State and Local Government Requirements Branch, headed by Maury Maverick, ex-mayor of San Antonio, Texas, to aid governmental agencies in solving problems of procurement and supply and expedite action on specific applications for priority ratings. Other purposes of the new unit are to promote the conservation of strategic materials by a broad program, to foster standard specifications for governmental purchasing, and to further the use of suitable and available substitutes where serious shortages of particular materials develop.

The Supply Priorities and Allocations Board in October urged all governmental agencies, including cities, to refrain from issuing permits or other authorizations for construction work not vitally needed and as to which priorities assistance would have to be denied.

The Office of Production Management, through its director of priorities, Donald M. Nelson, eased the situation somewhat by its preferred rating order P-22 of September 9, which gave an automatic A-10 rating to materials needed because of actual or imminent breakdown of property or equipment used for fire or police service, highway maintenance, schools, hospitals, and public transportation. Supplies for operation were not covered, however, and if not available from suppliers' stocks, have required individual preference rating certificates.

In cases of extreme emergency higher ratings were to be granted without requiring formal application if adequate information is supplied.

On October 16 a comprehensive revision of the P-22 order was issued, extending A-10 rating to all maintenance, repair, and operating supplies requirements of cities and other governmental

bodies—with a warning against unnecessary applications.

On September 17 another order was issued (preference rating order P-46) extending the A-10 rating to materials and supplies for water, gas, electric, and steam heat utilities and sewerage systems, and covering operating supplies and maintenance and repair material for essential public service, but not to be used for the purpose of plant expansion.

New construction and expansion can be aided by project ratings, under preference rating order P-19; they are obtained from the Projects Priority Group of the Division of Priorities, OPM.

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### ***Council-Manager Plan News***

The manager plan has aroused active interest in **Concord, New Hampshire**, where a group of leading citizens has explored the possibilities of bringing it to a vote this fall. It was decided, however, that the attempt should not be made at this time, but that a further study of the question would be carried on.

The Town Affairs Committee of the **Glastonbury, Connecticut**, Chamber of Commerce, is studying various forms of town government and has arranged for outside speakers. An unsigned form letter to Glastonbury voters, advocating the town manager plan, was recently circulated by unknown parties.

The Citizens' League of **Margate, New Jersey**, on October 7 voted unanimously in favor of replacing the existing commission form of government by the manager plan, to obtain expert full-time administration. Petitions have been circulated and a referendum has been set for November 18. The *Press* of adjacent **Atlantic City** suggested a unified government for that region.

The Lions Club of **Ponce, Puerto**



**Rico**, is evidencing an active interest in the manager plan.

The radio station KFJI in **Klamath Falls, Oregon**, where a new charter is in course of preparation, is promoting the manager plan for a combined city and county government.

In **Tompkins County, New York**, H. N. Gordon was nominated for county supervisor from the town of Ithaca on the Republican ticket, after a campaign in which he advocated the county manager plan.

Interest in the manager plan is being shown in **Santa Monica, California**.

City Manager Whitney of Yonkers, New York, was host on October 1 to a meeting of managers of various municipalities within approximately 150 miles of New York City; these included Larchmont, Scarsdale, and Schenectady, New York; Hackensack and Teaneck, New Jersey; and Bloomfield, Connecticut.

### ***District Managers Urged in Maine***

At the closing session of the Maine Town and City Managers' Association, held in Portland early in October, Fred D. Farnsworth of Bangor, president of the association, reported that thirty-two towns and cities in Maine have managers, and an additional twelve have town agents, making a total of forty-four communities, with a combined population of over 254,000, which have appointed chief executive officers. He noted that the county manager movement had made progress elsewhere, stating, however, that it is not likely to develop in New England, where the county performs few functions. He continued:

"But I do look to a district unit of local government in the future where sparsely settled areas and small villages are common. A number of these grouped together in a district under

one manager is, I believe, the solution if insolvency is to be further avoided, as already too many towns have been taken over by the state and where this is done the citizens very largely lose their right to determine the administration of the fiscal and prudential affairs of their own municipality.

"A beginning in the direction of districts has already been made by the action of the 1939 legislature in legalizing the union of two or more towns, with standard charters, under one manager."

### ***City Revitalization Urged by Land Institute***

A conference on city replanning was held in Cambridge, Massachusetts, October 15-17, by the Urban Land Institute, an organization founded two years ago by leaders in real estate, finance, manufacturing, merchandising, public administration, and civic groups.<sup>1</sup> It was attended by about 100 public officials, planning authorities, real estate representatives, civic leaders, and others interested in urban land problems.

The obsolescence and inadequacy of the existing physical layout and governmental organization of our cities and metropolitan districts were subjects of special emphasis and attack. It was indicated that unless positive steps are taken soon to stop the ravages of blight and decay we can expect a process of gradual urban disintegration—physically, politically, and socially—with continually declining land values and increasingly unfavor-

<sup>1</sup>See "Drastic Changes Urged in Boston," NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, February 1941, p. 111; "New City Plan Urged for Cincinnati," April 1941, p. 223; and "Decentralization in New York City," May 1941, p. 292, for accounts of special studies of various cities by the Institute.

able neighborhood and family environment.

Urban land uses and traffic systems must be realistically replanned, with emphasis on the development of wholesome home neighborhoods; any piecemeal attack on the housing question which ignores the basic need of city replanning can have only partial success and may aggravate blight, according to the conference leaders. Metropolitan communities must devise governmental machinery capable of supplying public services over their entire areas.

Walter S. Schmidt of Cincinnati, president of the institute, stressed the objective of making cities better places in which to live and do business, with financially sound governmental organization. Charles T. Stewart, the institute's administrative secretary, criticized the overlapping of governmental jurisdictions and proposed various measures for consolidating municipal functions.

Arthur W. Binns of Philadelphia, chairman of the committee on housing and blighted areas of the National Association of Real Estate Boards, presented proposals for a federal land commission, as part of a land conservation department, to exercise the right of eminent domain in the assembly of areas large enough for redevelopment purposes, with local city plan commissions functioning thereunder; the assembled land to be leased to private persons or organizations, redevelopment by whom would be financed with a 90 per cent insured under FHA regulations.

Gordon Whitnall, city planning consultant for the Institute, discussed the need of revised zoning policy and the possibilities of neighborhood units in replanning.

### ***Louisiana Reorganization Unsettled***

The state reorganization act passed by the 1940 Louisiana legislature, based on the comprehensive reorganization constitutional amendment previously adopted in that state, has been left in an uncertain status by the decision of the Louisiana Supreme Court that the amendment is unconstitutional. A ruling by the court as to the effect on the reorganization act is hoped for shortly; meanwhile state officials, and also the lower courts, do not know how much of the act may be valid, and the state government is correspondingly hampered.

### ***Jersey Constitution Taken for a Ride***

The aged constitution of New Jersey, drafted in 1844, had its first ride since that time—from Trenton to Orange—on October 1 in the automobile of Secretary of State Joseph A. Brophy. At the Orange City Hall the constitution was appropriately greeted by two women in antique costumes in a horse and buggy and taken to the Orange Adult Education Center, where it was subjected to an ordeal of ridicule by several speakers who advocated a constitutional convention to modernize the state's basic law.

At the state convention of the two major parties, held late in September, the Democrats adopted a plank calling for a convention, and the Republicans, after being told that similar action by them would be a victory for Governor Edison and his party, voted in favor of revision by the process of amendment.

### ***News from New Hampshire***

*Town report contest:* The Bureau of Government Research of the University of New Hampshire recently announced awards in the town report contest in

thirteen classes ranging from towns of less than 250 population to towns or cities exceeding 20,000. The communities winning awards, arranged in order of population, were as follows: Randolph, Richmond, Harrisville, Loudon, Andover, Rollinsford, Hopkinton, Hampton, Wolfeboro, Hanover, Lebanon, Rochester, and Concord.

Concord not only won the award for the best report of large cities but the first award for the entire state. Fifty-nine cities and towns—almost one-third of the total in the state—entered this first contest conducted in New Hampshire. From the interest aroused it is expected that a much larger number will enter next year's contest for 1941 reports.

*Police active:* New Hampshire state and local police during the month of September showed an unusual interest in obtaining information on the solution of problems facing police during the present crisis. Approximately thirty state and local police attended a police school held at the University of New Hampshire from September 8 to 12, where emphasis was placed on legal and traffic problems. The following week the New England Association of Chiefs of Police held its eighteenth annual convention at Bretton Woods. National defense problems constituted the central theme of this year's program. The more serious aspects of crime detention and legal procedures, however, were abandoned by the New Hampshire Police Association when it met for its annual outing at Portsmouth on September 19. In these schools and conferences both state and local police turned their attention to the problems of police protection which face them in a country geared for national defense.

*Constitutional convention:* New Hampshire's twelfth constitutional convention sitting in special session passed

a proposed amendment to the state's constitution limiting the size of the lower chamber of the legislature to 400. Specifically the measure would fix the membership at "not less than 375 or more than 400," which in effect is a freezing of the size to slightly less than it has been during the past decade. Many plans for reduction of the house have been submitted in previous conventions but failed of ratification at the polls because of fear by the towns that they would lose representation and power in the legislature.

LASHLEY G. HARVEY

University of New Hampshire

### ***Eastern States Ratify Fisheries Compact***

Climaxing six years of effort by commissioners on interstate coöperation of the participating states, the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Compact goes into formal effect this month. The compact was signed in September by the governors of Delaware, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, and New York. Of the remaining Atlantic coast states, according to the Council of State Governments, Rhode Island has ratified the compact, Virginia and South Carolina are expected to ratify it in their 1942 legislative session, and Florida, Georgia, Maine, and North Carolina in 1943 since their governing bodies do not convene in 1942. Connecticut voted against the plan but may reconsider its action.

Under the compact a commission will be appointed to develop a fourteen-state fish conservation program, and to study and recommend methods or types of regulation best designed to preserve the Atlantic coast fishing industry.

The commission will have no executive powers, but will confine itself to recommending action to the legislatures



of the various states. It will be financed by annual appropriations made by the participating states in proportion to the primary market value of the products of their fisheries.

The states earlier this year received congressional approval, required by the federal constitution, to enter into the compact.

### **Public Housing Constitutional**

The Supreme Court of the United States on October 13, in a suit against the Alley Dwelling Authority for the District of Columbia, declined to review the decision of the Court of Appeals that Congress, in the District of Columbia, as well as the legislatures in the various states, may validly provide for low-rent housing projects and authorize the condemnation of land for that purpose. Slum reclamation or slum clearance, in connection with low-rent housing, which has been involved in various lower court decisions favoring public housing legislation, did not enter into this case as a basis for the court's decision.

### **Social Science Fellowships**

For the academic year 1942-43 the Social Science Research Council offers a number of predoctoral field fellowships and postdoctoral research fellowships, and also grants in aid of research by mature scholars without age limit, all of these being for work in political science and other social sciences. The predoctoral fellowships are a new undertaking of the council and are intended to foster realistic field research, such as direct contact with governmental agencies and their work would facilitate. Application blanks for fellowships must be submitted to the council's fellowship secretary at 230 Park Avenue, New York City, by February 1, 1942, and for grants in aid by January 15.

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## **Citizen Action**

*Edited by Elwood N. Thompson*

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### **Roundup—**

**A**LL too frequently citizen groups organized to achieve a specific governmental reform go out of existence once that reform has been accomplished because they feel their function is over. . . . So we were particularly pleased to learn from the first issue of *The Citizen* that the recently organized **Citizens League of Port Huron, Michigan**, has no such intention. In fact, it is embarking on a campaign of expansion to make a success of the new city manager charter which it helped to secure.

Every four years the **City Club of Albany** adopts a Citizen's Platform as a program of action for the succeeding four years. The 1941 platform is broken down by subject matter—child welfare, finance, housing, library, etc. Under each heading, in addition to recommendations, there is a summary of progress since 1937. The inclusion of this latter item strikes us as a particularly good idea, since it gives club members some basis for comparing what has actually been accomplished with what they have been shooting at over a four-year period.

On October 29 the **Yonkers Committee of 100**, which as a matter of policy does not take a stand on candidates for local office, held a "Town Meeting." Candidates for the city council were present and answered questions submitted to them about their plans, if elected, for the conduct of the affairs of the city. . . . We are heartily in favor of this idea or any similar one which gives citizens an opportunity to get a look at the individuals who are running for office and hear what they are thinking about public affairs.

Another method of accomplishing the same result is for the citizen group to send a questionnaire to candidates and then publish its findings. . . . As in the past, the **Citizens Union of New York** sent such a questionnaire this year to candidates for mayor, comptroller, judges, the city council, etc.

You'll also be interested in seeing the nineteenth edition of the *Voter's Directory* published by the **Civic Club of Allegheny County** (Pittsburgh). Voters who wanted to know about their candidates prior to Pittsburgh's election November 4 could get an impartial opinion at a glance.

One reason for the continued success of the **League of Women Voters** may be the willingness (even eagerness) of its members to admit how much they have to learn. . . . In Illinois where the first item in the program of action for 1941-42 is "Taxation and Defense," twenty-one local leagues are holding one-day tax schools in their own communities. In preparation for the schools a three-day training course for leaders was held at state headquarters in August.

Have you seen the **Philadelphia Committee of Seventy's** new guide book for voters? Large, clear print, good composition, and quick reading time insure its usefulness in the committee's perpetual campaign for clean elections and intelligent voting. The material covers twenty pages of a booklet that will fit an ordinary envelope. These are among the headings that challenge the reader: "Your Responsibility," "Your Vote and Practical Politics," "Ward and City Committees," "State and National Committees," "Voting Procedure," "Election Crimes and Penalties."

The **Citizens League of Cleveland** devoted an entire issue of its bulletin, *Greater Cleveland*, to the need for county charter revision.<sup>1</sup> A reprint of the

ballot on page one showed the voter how to approve the election of a commission to rewrite the charter from the league's own slate of candidates for the job. The issues of revision were outlined clearly and simply, to give the voter background on the question.

### ***About Doing Something for Democracy***

We believe you'll want to follow the development of Kansas City's new Public Affairs Forum and are therefore carrying this outline of its background and future. It is from the bulletin of the Civic Research Institute, directed by Loren B. Miller, which is sponsoring the project.

The plan strikes us as well suited to the times, and the philosophy of citizen action behind it seems flawless.—THE EDITOR.

For the past twenty years the **Civic Research Institute**, like similar organizations in other cities throughout the country, has functioned as an independently supported, citizen fact-finding or research agency.

Ever-growing magnitude and complexity of urban government created a widening and bewildering chasm between the citizen and his government. The citizen research bureau was designed to bridge this gap by offering a competent source of impartial information.

Research bureaus have had other subsidiary roles: the citizen watch-dog on the city hall steps, the helping hand to conscientious officials too busy with doing things to worry much about how they were being done.

These purposes have assumed varying importance under differing circumstances. Yet the fundamental purpose of citizen research has remained that of being an agency to furnish analysis of governmental problems and thereby to assist in maintaining citizen control of government. And citizen

<sup>1</sup>See also p. 658 of this issue.

control of government is, after all, the essence of democracy.

Parallel to this function of research, as an additional implement to the operation of a democratic government and the maintenance of citizen control, the Civic Research Institute now is adding a new service and function.

### Citizen Discussion

Sponsorship of the recently initiated program of citizen discussion known as the **Public Affairs Institute** has been assumed by the Civic Research Institute.

It will be continued under the name Public Affairs Forum as having greater connotation in itself to the average citizen.

It will be continued as a program of discussion to create broader understanding of the problems—local, state, national, and international—confronting a citizen in a democracy.

Broadly speaking, the Public Affairs Forum is a program of citizen education by discussion designed: to assist and encourage the average citizen to think—to become informed—about public matters, to determine a viewpoint or opinion by a logical and factual process, to exchange opinions with others.

The key role played by the citizen in a democracy is obvious. Because of the very nature of that role, the degree of adequacy with which it is fulfilled must determine results achieved, actions taken, directions assumed. Nothing can be substituted for it and still retain a democratic process. Yet little—or much too little—has been done to aid its fulfillment.

In its basic features the Public Affairs Forum is an effort to recapture the tradition and essence of early "town hall" meetings. The essential contribution made by that early social practice was first the determination

of public questions by a thorough process of discussion; and second, through this process, establishing an informed, interested citizenry.

The citizen retained a direct interest—and a broadly social interest—in his government because he still could feel that he was a part of the government, that his influence could reach that government, that in effect he and his government were but reflections of the same thing—not separate and distinct entities.

Today, the scale of proportions is immensely larger. Yet the need remains the same; and if the scale has increased, so also have the methods and techniques that can be applied. Certainly little will be gained without trying.

### Proposed Program

Specific aspects of the program will be:

- To encourage the formation of citizen groups for discussion of public affairs,
- To assist in the conduct of such discussion meetings,
- To indicate sources of factual material pertinent to the subjects of discussion,
- To assist in the training of effective discussion leaders,
- To conduct sectional and city-wide conferences or forums for the presentation and discussion of citizen problems.

In assuming sponsorship of this program as a parallel to the research function, the trustees of the Institute do so in the belief that it fills an essential need in the continued and successful operation of a democratic government and something more must be done than merely to wish democracy "well," that it offers a significant contribution to community life.

It also is appropriate that the Civic Research Institute should undertake



these dual services to the community. In a number of respects the program of citizen research and citizen education complement and parallel each other.

As one example, while research must be factual else it is not research, discussion must be open to all points of view else it is neither discussion nor education. It is only by the rigid maintenance of these standards that these functions can stand either alone or together. It is equally imperative for both.

Other advantages also accrue. Being allied with a broad citizen discussion program will offer the research function a natural opportunity for the more effective use of its research materials—having them reach the citizen for whom they are intended.

At the same time, being thus allied with the research program will offer the Public Affairs Forum facilities for obtaining the factual material and factual viewpoint necessary to the maintenance of that program.

It is a program of broad citizen interest. Only by broad citizen participation will its full effectiveness and benefit be realized.

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### ***When It Comes to Logic We'll Take Satire—***

For years New York has been talking and writing about why and how it should get rid of useless sheriffs in the counties which go to make up the greater city.

The public finally got a chance to vote on the issue November 4, with benefit of this one-paragraph summary from the *New Yorker* magazine of October 18.

*Moral:* One paragraph of satire may be worth more than a book of logical arguments.—THE EDITOR.

Commissioner William B. Herlands [New York City Department of Investigation] has dug up at least thirty cases of alteration of records and em-

bezzlement of petty cash by County Sheriff Finn's aides, not to mention evidence of some very tricky voting from false addresses by a deputy sheriff and his family. What appeals to us about this is the attitude Sheriff Finn has taken toward the disclosures. He is not so much upset by all the skulduggery as by the fact that no one bothers to tell him what's going on, or even lets him see the data of the investigation. "I should think," he told the papers plaintively, "that as sheriff of New York County I was entitled to this information."

We like the vision of our sheriff, his badge tarnishing with disuse and the seat of his pants shiny from inactivity, hurt and unhappy because no one will let him play sheriff in investigating his own office. All the picture really needs to make it perfect is Victor Moore, his small, round body bristling with righteousness, his moon face aglow with eager innocence, and clearly knowing less about what's up than the ladies in the chorus.

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### **County and Township** *Edited by Elwyn A. Mauck*

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## **Wisconsin Enacts Laws on County Finance**

***Additional counties now  
subject to budget law***

THE 1941 session of the Wisconsin legislature passed several laws relating to county government in the state. From the standpoint of improving county administration probably the most important of these is the expansion of the law requiring budgetary procedure to include all counties having a population of less than 300,000. The law specifically requires that the budget document show compar-

able figures for the two previous years as well as estimated receipts and expenditures for the budgeted period, and that adequate public hearings be held prior to adoption. The state municipal accounting office is directed to assist in the installation of improved budgetary procedures.

The problem of tax-delinquent lands and their disposal continues to confront the state and especially some counties. Among several acts relating to the disposition of such lands through tax sales, one is of particular interest as an experiment in controlling land use and forestry practices through deed restrictions. Under its provisions county boards may dispose of any county-held real estate (except that donated to be held for a specific purpose) and may restrict the right of the grantee to cut timber on forested areas to trees that have a minimum diameter of six inches at a point two feet above the ground. Liberally used, this device appears to have great promise as an approach to the solution of the cut-over and second-growth timberland problems of the state.

Minor legislation affecting counties includes laws permitting county participation in food stamp commodity distribution plans, regulation of auto junk yards in unincorporated areas, and expansion of the county zoning power in areas surrounding airports. The last named law permits height, location, and area restrictions near public or private flying fields and permits counties to use the power of eminent domain in removing obstructions existing prior to adoption of the restrictive ordinances. As was true in the previous law, zoning regulations affecting towns must be approved by the respective town meetings for final adoption.

The movement for general reform of county government received a set-

back when the latest motion for a constitutional amendment to permit optional forms of county government failed to receive consideration by the Senate before it adjourned. The state Supreme Court has held that optional forms of town and county organization are inconsistent with the present constitutional requirement that a uniform system be maintained. Even if adopted at the next session, the plan could not go into effect for five years since the constitution requires passage by two successive legislatures and a general referendum.

ROBERT M. MANGAN

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### ***Pennsylvania Townships Brought under Merit System***

Under a law enacted by the 1941 Pennsylvania legislature first class townships are grouped with cities and boroughs regarding the establishment of a merit system for police officers. All townships of the first class employing more than two policemen are required to set up civil service commissions to select police personnel. Since many townships at present are at a loss regarding proper procedure, they are turning to the state civil service agency for coöperation and guidance.

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### ***Draft Revelations Impose Duties on Counties and Townships***

As a result of an announcement made recently by President Roosevelt, counties and townships soon may be engaged in new and enlarged activities in the fields of curative medicine and adult education. The President stated that in the administration of the selective service act the rejection of nearly half the young men examined as unfit for military service constituted a severe indictment of America, and that a long-range program requiring the coöperation of states, counties, cities, and townships would be initiated

shortly in an attempt to remedy the underlying causes. Twenty per cent of the rejected men have physical defects which can and will be cured immediately with the cost borne by the federal government. Seventy per cent will require a longer period to effect a cure or are classified as incurable; the remaining 100,000 men are disqualified because they do not have the necessary equivalent of a fourth-grade education. For most of the larger municipalities this announcement will mean merely an expansion of present functions, but for most counties and townships it will mark their entrance into a new activity on an extensive scale.

### ***Corruption Stirs Wicomico County, Maryland***

Wholesale corruption may result in reorganization and reform of government in Wicomico County, Maryland. The five county commissioners have been found guilty of misfeasance and the clerk of the board has pleaded guilty to forgery, larceny, and misappropriation of county funds. Further indictments may be in process.

Public interest in the manager plan, which could be obtained under Maryland's constitutional county home rule provisions, is rising rapidly. Interest in the plan was given its greatest impetus when the grand jury bringing the indictments declared the governmental structure to be outmoded and recommended adoption of the manager system.

### ***Cuyahoga County, Ohio, Votes on Charter Commission***

Voters of Cuyahoga County (Cleveland) have just defeated a proposal to elect a commission to draft a new charter for the county.

According to the Cleveland Citizens League, the question of electing a county charter commission, and choosing fifteen commissioners to serve on

it, was the major issue on Cuyahoga County's ballot this fall. The Board of Trustees and the City-County Charter Committee of the Citizens' League supported the question and placed a strong slate of candidates for the commission on the ballot.

Said the League in its bulletin, *Greater Cleveland*, for October 16:

"The existing form of county government, framed eighty years ago to meet the needs of sparsely populated rural counties, is wholly unsuited to the needs of a populous county like Cuyahoga, with greatly diversified functions, and full of municipalities.

"County government in Ohio is headless. No responsible officer or authority is provided by law to direct and supervise the expenditures in this county of nearly \$20,000,000 annually for county purposes alone, by the fifteen separate and largely independent county departments and offices.

"Local government in the county is scattered through 103 political subdivisions which, together with the county, are spending in excess of \$105,000,000 annually for local government.

"Cuyahoga County is in great need of a simplified, unified, and more efficient form of government."

### ***County Reform Votes in New York***

New York City had three proposals on the November 4 ballot for reform of county government within the city.<sup>1</sup> The first proposal, supported by numerous civic groups, won by a decisive majority; the other two, supported by the Democratic machine, were defeated.

In Westchester County, New York, civic groups failed in their efforts to cut the size of the Board of Supervisors from forty-four to eleven.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>See October REVIEW, p. 604.

<sup>2</sup>See September REVIEW, p. 545.



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**Taxation and Finance**  
*Edited by Wade S. Smith*

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**National Defense Effort  
Hits Local Finance**  
***Municipal bond sales  
show marked decrease***

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AS THE year moved into its fourth and final quarter the effects of the national defense program on local government became more pronounced. And nowhere did coming events cast their shadows more plainly than in the field of local borrowing.

The slackening of new bond issues by states, counties, cities, school districts, and other local units has been increasingly evident in recent months, but by early October it was striking. Municipal bond sales in September 1941 were only \$46,000,000 as compared with \$77,000,000 in the same month last year, according to the *Daily Bond Buyer*, financial paper of the local bond field. The first week in October the *Bond Buyer's* tabulation of the visible supply of long-term municipal bonds showed only about \$25,000,000 of local borrowing in sight, whereas a year earlier the amount had been \$120,000,000. With financing for the first nine months of 1941 at about \$981,000,000 as compared with \$1,033,000,000 for the same period in 1940, it was evident that the curtailment of long-term local borrowing—probably to last for the “duration”—had set in.

The fall elections, usually the occasion for sizable bond authorizations, present a bare contrast to most recent years. To date only one major improvement program has been authorized, that of Houston, Texas, which early in October voted \$8,470,000 of general improvement bonds for a long-term program of street, sewer, flood control, air-

port, and similar construction made necessary by the city's recent rapid growth. The largest issue on the November calendar is upwards of \$50,000,000 electric revenue bonds to be voted on by San Francisco, where a municipally-owned power distribution system must be acquired if the city is to keep its franchise to draw power and water from the Yosemite National Park. No other impressive issues have been announced, and even elections on small issues are few and far between.

One striking indication of the paucity of new issues, especially high-grade issues of interest to fiduciaries and other critical investors, occurred in connection with the U. S. Treasury's \$1,500,000,000 bond sale on October 9. At the opening of subscriptions for the issue New York's City Comptroller Joseph McGoldrick appeared with a \$10,000,000 certified check as deposit on a \$100,000,000 subscription for New York City sinking funds. The issue was greatly oversubscribed, and the city got only \$12,500,000, but its readiness to take the large block of 2.5 per cent long-term obligations showed both its need for suitable investment outlets and the pressure for yields even moderately above those resulting from recently prevailing high bond prices.

**Reasons Cited**

Causes for the falling off in local borrowing are not hard to find. Uncertainty about ability to get materials to carry on construction has been a deterrent for some months now, as has the general tendency to curtail commitments in view of revenue uncertainties during coming and more critical years. The OPM's September and October priorities regulations on new construction will effect further curtailments, since materials will now be released only for urgent needs and projects intimately connected with na-

tional defense. A further factor is that the public works programs of recent years, accompanied by attractive federal grants and loans, had in many localities pretty well taken care of urgent needs even before that program was slackened off and national defense came to the fore.

Hence many communities find themselves in an excellent position to sit tight, restrict capital outlays to amounts which can be handled from current revenues, and plan a reservoir of new public works to take up the employment slack when the post-war readjustment period begins.

### Conferences Discuss Matter

Further evidences of the impact of the national defense program on local finance came as the fall series of conventions and conferences of local officers and experts began. At New York, on September 3 and 4, a seven-state meeting of the Municipal Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada heard officials and other experts on the role of the municipality in national defense. Officials were present from Connecticut, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, and Rhode Island. The National Tax Association, meeting at St. Paul October 13-16, discussed the problem. And at Knoxville on October 17 and 18 the Tennessee Municipal League and the University of Tennessee sponsored the second annual Southern Institute of Local Government, with problems posed by the defense program conspicuous in the topics to be discussed.

In all these gatherings the shapers of local fiscal policy were urged to get their financial houses in order to withstand the fiscal crisis which the experts virtually unanimously agree will accompany and follow our defense effort. Cutting of "non-essential" expenditures

will be urged, a "moratorium on borrowing" will be proposed, and there will be no lack of exhortations to give the property taxpayer a "breathing spell" that he may brace himself for the next storm.

### A Few Suggestions

Not to be outdone, this department has several concrete suggestions respecting 1942 budgets to pass along:

1. Curtail operating expenditures to the lowest limit consistent with the stable employment of those in the public service. Priorities unemployment is no longer around the corner—it is here; and expenditure slashing which drops jobs is just going to add to unemployment relief.

2. Budget for every needed maintenance expense, planning ahead for substitute materials and methods where priorities are likely to affect normal procedures. A good share of the borrowing of recent years has been to catch up on deferred maintenance: now, in a period of rising national income, is the time to avoid this burden in the next fiscal crisis.

3. Undertake no new capital improvements or extended services except where they are unavoidable because of population additions. Numerous defense centers, with a great influx of workers and their families, have no option; but extensions of facilities and services to realtors' speculatively-conceived subdivisions, to cite just one example, are now indefensible.

4. Appropriate for every penny of debt service which may legally be included in the budget. Debt retirement must be the order of the day; if bonds can be called prior to maturity, levy as much as taxpayers will stand to call them; if bonds are term, build sinking funds to required levels; if bonds are serial, meet every maturity during the coming year from current revenues.

The postponement of retirement by re-funding will be inexcusable during 1942.

5. Balance the budget with a vengeance by making every estimate of revenues conservative, and by budgeting for every accumulated deficit. Cut out all appropriations from "surplus." Nineteen hundred and forty-two may be the last year of lush revenue collections—inflated revenue estimates or a carryover of deficiencies into 1943 may well mean serious trouble later.

The five points above add up to just one total—the accumulation of *reserves* to cushion what may be ahead. Hewing to the line on "ordinary" expenditures gives the taxpayer his breathing spell, which, theoretically at least, permits putting the private house in order. Meeting regular maintenance now gets it out of the way before revenue problems are critical; later, there may be no option about deferring it.

Debt retirement means the accumulation of an additional credit margin against which the community will have to borrow to meet post-war adjustment programs and perhaps even to meet war-time emergencies. And a budget conservatively balanced, without inflated revenue estimates, means the opportunity to accumulate a cash surplus in the municipal coffers to meet extraordinary demands as they arise.

If the experience of the early 1930's taught us anything, it was that the time to prepare for financial difficulties is in the years of high national income, not after the problem becomes acute. Hence a low tax rate for 1942 is not so important for local governments as is a tax rate high enough to put the local house in order.

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### **State Taxes in 1941 up 7 Per Cent**

State tax collections for the fiscal year ending in 1941 will approach

\$4,500,000,000, increasing 7 per cent above 1940, according to a preliminary report of *State Tax Collections: 1941*, released by the Bureau of the Census. This figure, which reflects the rapid acceleration of business activities in connection with national defense, is based upon trends from collections reported for the states in which 1941 fiscal years have already ended.

Most striking increases occurred in collections of state income taxes, which rose 17 per cent, and general sales taxes, which were up 13 per cent over last year. Other sales taxes also showed increased collections: from gasoline 8 per cent, alcoholic beverages 8 per cent, and tobacco products 6 per cent. Total collections of all types of sales taxes combined increased 9 per cent over 1940, or from \$149,000,000, to a total of \$1,796,000,000. Unemployment compensation taxes increased 4 per cent over 1940.

Among the states with fiscal years that have already ended all but Delaware reported increased collections. Thirteen states reported unusual gains over last year as follows: Michigan 18 per cent, Virginia 18 per cent, North Carolina 15 per cent, North Dakota 15 per cent, Georgia 13 per cent, Kentucky 13 per cent, Oregon 13 per cent, South Carolina 13 per cent, California 11 per cent, Washington 10 per cent, Wisconsin 10 per cent, Montana 9 per cent, and Tennessee 7 per cent.

In addition to California, Michigan, and Wisconsin, other states with collections exceeding \$100,000,000 in 1941 reported increases over last year as follows: New York 5 per cent, Illinois 4 per cent, Indiana 3 per cent, and New Jersey 6 per cent.

Alcoholic beverage users are contributing 5 per cent more than last year, or a total of about \$273,000,000 in the form of state sales and license taxes in 1941. Motorists furnished \$1,326,000,000



in gasoline sales and motor vehicle license taxes in 1941, 8 per cent more than last year. Tobacco smokers paid \$103,000,000 in 1941, 6 per cent above 1940, while sportsmen paid increased fees for hunting and fishing licenses of 5 per cent over last year.

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### ***Insurance Pays Tacoma Bridge Debt***

On October 1, almost exactly a year after the bonds were sold to the public, the Washington Toll Bridge Authority called for payment the \$3,750,000 bridge revenue bonds issued for the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, which collapsed in a high wind early in November 1940, about four months after it had been opened for service. The bridge had been fully covered by insurance<sup>1</sup> and earlier in the year \$240,000 use and occupancy insurance had been paid covering several years interest requirements. The total insurance received was \$4,240,000. The amount not needed for debt retirement, roughly \$343,000, will be used for preliminary work on a new span which will begin at once.

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### ***St. Paul Seeks to Halt Taxpayer Migration***

In common with most of our large cities, St. Paul, Minnesota, has suffered from a migration of population to the suburbs, with a corresponding loss of taxes and an intensification of the problems of decreased property values and heavier tax delinquency. Much of the adjacent suburban or rural area, on the other hand, receives various governmental services at little or no cost from the central city.

St. Paul's population increased only 5.9 per cent in the years 1930-1940, while the population of rural Ramsey County increased more than 68 per

cent. In the same period real property in the city decreased 27 per cent in value in contrast to a 25 per cent increase in the county district. St. Paul's tax rate accordingly rose from about 70 mills in 1930 to 100 mills in 1940. Many property owners permitted their land to revert to the state for taxes, and by January 1941, nearly 16 per cent of all city parcels were under state ownership by forfeiture.

A special committee was appointed by the mayor to study the problem. It has recently made the following recommendations which the American Society of Planning Officials considers applicable to other metropolitan cities:

1. Revaluation of all properties to bring tax assessments in line with economic values of the land, and the prevention of further tax forfeitures to maintain the tax base;

2. Large-scale development of parking lots in the business district through wrecking of obsolete buildings and installation of parking meters on main streets;

3. Revision of the zoning ordinance to provide for more off-street parking and reduce the area zoned for non-residential use;

4. Modernization of the building code to enable use of less expensive materials and thus encourage private and public housing;

5. Increase of all charges for services supplied by the city to suburban areas to meet the cost of service rendered;

6. Incorporation of a new tax source in the state tax system, the proceeds of which would be returned to cities.

Exemplifying the fifth of these recommendations the adjoining metropolitan city, Minneapolis, last month tripled fees for supplying fire protection to communities outside the city limits, after study of the city's experience over ten years in providing fire-fighting service to outside areas.

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<sup>1</sup>See NATIONAL MUNICIPAL REVIEW, December 1940, p. 825.

## Proportional Representation

*Edited by George H. Hallett, Jr.*

(This department is successor to the  
Proportional Representation Review)

## A Canadian Study of P. R.

### *Montreal Junior Board of Trade Reports*

A SPECIAL committee of the Montreal Junior Board of Trade, at the request of the Montreal Board of Trade, has recently completed and published in sixty-three mimeographed pages a careful and comprehensive study on proportional representation. The theory, experience, and arguments pro and con are considered with regard to federal, provincial, and local elections, with special reference to Montreal. No attempt is made to present detailed recommendations for action, the purpose of the report being to present information on which action by others can be intelligently based. The general conclusions of the report are summarized by the committee as follows:

1. The Report is "pro P.R." This is the unintentional result of our studies. This bias has been allowed to remain in the interests of the report itself.
2. P.R. is not likely to be adopted as the result of legislative action alone. It will come about as the result of a crisis or as the result of public pressure.
3. This being so, its adoption will always presuppose very considerable public education.
4. The single transferable vote in multi-member constituencies is strongly recommended over all other types of P.R. and all these observations are predicated on this basis.
5. The claims of P.R. advocates,

both for P.R. and against the present system, seem to be, in the main, justified. They are, however, based upon premises which some would reject. These are:

- (a) The opinions of the voters should be represented in their true proportions.
- (b) The majority shall rule and all considerable minorities shall be heard.
- (c) Voters should be given a wider freedom in the choice of representatives.
- (d) Representatives should be made more independent.
- (e) The entry of the country's ablest citizens into public life should be encouraged.

6. We suggest that the technical and mechanical difficulties of P.R. have been exaggerated by its opponents. On the other hand, regulations for P.R. elections should be drawn up with great care by persons having a thorough knowledge of both P.R. and the local conditions, and the actual conduct of elections and the subsequent count should be in the hands of a carefully trained staff.

In regard to Montreal the report concludes:

1. The main arguments against P.R. in the federal or provincial field do not apply to P.R. in the municipal field.
2. P.R. is particularly suited to combating political abuses common to municipal government.
3. We point out that all the preliminary steps necessary to the adoption of P.R. in Montreal—the re-division of the city, multi-member districts, a reduction in the number of council—have all been recommended as necessary reforms by the recent Commission on Modification,

under the chairmanship of ex-Mayor Raynault.

4. With regard to the redistribution of Montreal, we favor Plan 2 of the Metropolitan Commission. This plan divides Montreal into five districts. We feel that a council of twenty-five, with five from each district, would, under this division, result in a very fair representation of the races and interests involved.

### ***So They're Swatting P. R. Again!***

EDITOR'S NOTE.—Under the title above the Yonkers, New York, *Herald Statesman* of October 23 carried an excellent editorial from which we are glad to reproduce the following excerpts:

In his fervent condemnation of proportional representation as a system of electing members of the Yonkers Common Council, Edward J. Murray, Democratic city and county chairman, promotes an important discussion—and, incidentally, lets the cat out of the bag.

His statement—blaming P.R. for the decline in Yonkers registration—reveals once again that the so-called political machines are scared to death of P.R., both for what it has done to them and for what it may yet do when the voters begin to realize fully the great value of P.R. in the striving for good government.

It isn't the first time that P.R. has been attacked by entrenched partisans—and it won't be the last.

Mr. Murray says he "honestly believes the registration decrease was due to lack of interest in the present method of voting, and by the present method I mean proportional representation."

Evidently he closes his eyes to the decline throughout the county and state, particularly in municipalities having the old-fashioned system under

which political machines hold cities rigidly in their grip year after year.

"Many persons who were requested by our workers to register," continues Mr. Murray, "expressed themselves as dissatisfied with the confusion of P.R. and said they were not interested and would not register."

That this cannot possibly be a common complaint was proved amply two years ago, when Yonkers first experimented with P.R. Men and women went to the polls without any show of confusion. They found it to be simplicity itself. They merely picked their favorite candidates as they pick horses at a race track, putting down their preferences in numerical order—putting numbers alongside the names of the chosen candidates—1, 2, 3, 4, etc. What confusion?

That there is considerable dissatisfaction among party members worried over the controls and over disturbed patronage can hardly be surprising for if it has done nothing else, P.R. has proved in many cities—particularly in New York and in Cincinnati—that it can rout the political spoilsmen and keep them at bay.

P.R. has proved—in other cities and also here in Yonkers—that it makes representative government a reality instead of a sham. . . .

P.R. is the only method by which the people are allowed full representation, the sure approach to democracy. Naturally, political leaders regard the old plan as perfect, because under it the people do not get the representation to which they are entitled.

Yonkers knows this. New York knows this. It was possible, heretofore, for Yonkers Democrats or Republicans to gain a slight majority in the city and still capture virtually complete control of the Common Council. In New York, Tammany Hall—obtaining only 65 per cent of the votes—was able to



capture sixty-four out of sixty-five Aldermanic posts. Well, those days are over, both in Yonkers and in New York. For P.R. cuts through all the fancy errymandering over districting, breaking down that monopoly of party machine control, by recognizing the political rights of the voters in proportion to their numbers—and nothing else.

P.R. emancipates the voter from being forced to vote for the candidate of one of two political machines—too often a choice between two evils.

Under P.R. minority groups get representation if they can get enough votes for a quota. The plurality party gets only that to which its numbers entitle it—and no more.

There are some persons who are concerned with the fact that this campaign doesn't have any of the hot-and-colder pitched battling which we used to have between Democratic and Republican nominees—shouting and name-calling and mud-slinging over issues which often were fake though colorful, howling promises which faded with the dawn after Election Day.

Under P.R. a candidate doesn't have to go in for that stuff. He can stand on definite principles, with the assurance that if they find favor with a group big enough to give him the quota, he will be elected.

Under P.R., the candidate doesn't have to straddle issues, he doesn't have to try to please everybody. He can be himself—and he can know that, if he is elected, he is elected for his own honor and integrity and morality and character, instead of because of the strength of his side or the blind allegiance of partisans, led by the nose by somebody at party headquarters. . . .

And we hope they [the voters] will recognize the tremendous power each voter holds in his palm—tremendous power for good government if he or she wills it—thanks to proportional

representation. P.R. can yet rescue and truly "rebuild" Yonkers, if the people but use it to that end!

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## THE RESEARCHER'S DIGEST

(Continued from Page 643)

**Governmental Research of the University of Washington**, in cooperation with the Washington State Library.

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## Research Bureau Reports Received

### *Defense*

Official Defense Publications. By Jerome K. Wilcox. Bureau of Public Administration, University of California, Berkeley, 1941. iii, 106 pp. mimeo.

Organizing for Defense. California State Council of Defense, Berkeley, 1941. 31 pp.

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### *Housing*

A Survey of Housing Authorities in Thirty-Three Cities. Bureau of Municipal Research and Service, University of Oregon, in cooperation with League of Oregon Cities, Eugene, 1941. 9 pp. mimeo.

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### *Libraries*

Serving the Unserved. Bureau of Governmental Research, University of Washington, Seattle, in cooperation with the Washington State Library, Olympia, 1941. 27 pp. mimeo.

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### *Parking Meters*

Parking Meters. Bureau of Municipal Research and Service, University of Oregon, in cooperation with League of Oregon Cities, Eugene, 1941. 16 pp. mimeo.

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### *Public Welfare*

Determining Work Loads for Professional Staff in a Public Welfare Agency. By Herbert A. Simon, William R. Divine, E. Myles Cooper, and Milton Chernin. Bureau of Public Administration, University of California, Berkeley, 1941. xii, 94 pp.

# Books in Review

Edited by ELSIE S. PARKER

**What is Democracy?** By Charles E. Merriam. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1941. 115 pp. \$1.00.

At a time when so much soul searching is taking place with regard to the democratic process, this little volume, containing five lectures given by Dr. Merriam at the University of Chicago in October and November 1940, under the auspices of the Walgreen Foundation, meets a real need.

The subject of democracy has been well nigh written to death. Hysteria has been mingled with much of what our old friend Professor Fairlie of Illinois describes so well in the term "guff." There is none of either in this little book which breathes a healthy and refreshing air of common sense into the whole subject. Take this for example:

"There are those who say that democracy is dying because some democratic states have gone down. But it does not affect the principle of democracy if a nation of eighty millions beats down a nation of eight millions."

Not that Professor Merriam is not a dreamer of dreams. Dreams, he infers, are the stuff of which achievement is made. "Have you no faith," he asks, "as well as reason and will? Faith . . . nerves the arm and sustains the assumptions of lovers of liberty in all times and places."

But Dr. Merriam is practitioner as well as dreamer. He answers first the basic challenge of the critics of democracy in terms both of history and logic. Second, he defines democracy not as a "mere form, a mere mechanism, . . . to be worshipped as an idol" but as a "mode of political coöperation through which the human personality may find the finest and richest expression of human values." He examines this mode

in terms of its products, "equality and "liberty." Third, he, as few other today, sees clearly that there are two jobs before us: (1) the examination of the "underlying principles and goal of democracy" and (2) "an equally painstaking examination of the way and means of putting these principle into practice." This second is, of course the job of public administration. We have learned much about public administration in the last quarter century. Dr. Merriam would be the first to say we still have much to learn.

H. P. J.

**Tax Barriers to Trade.** By Mark Eisner, etc. Philadelphia, Tax Institute University of Pennsylvania, 1941. vii + 344 pp. \$2.50.

This volume preserves in permanent form the papers presented at the 1941 meeting of the Tax Institute, formerly the Tax Policy League. These meetings and the symposia to which they give rise have become a happily anticipated annual event. The subject is one of considerable current interest. Its various phases, with the possible exception of the protective tariff, are well covered by interesting papers chiefly concerned with interstate barriers. One group deals with highway barriers, another with barriers to trade in particular commodities such as margarine and alcoholic beverages, a third with barriers to special forms of marketing such as chain stores and itinerant vendors. A whole section is devoted to the somewhat extraneous and highly technical matters of double taxation of incomes derived from international trade. The book concludes with several papers on "What can be done about trade barriers?"—meaning again, barriers to interstate trade.



As in all such symposia, the papers vary greatly in merit. This has peculiar disadvantages in the discussion of highly controversial subjects such as highway barriers. In that case a very able statement of the railroad point of view leaves the case of the farmer and the trucker at considerable disadvantage. Indeed, a number of the papers in this and the two following sections do little more than express the attitudes of the interest groups represented by their writers. In this connection it is unfortunate that the cities which come in for a drubbing on the subject of itinerant vendor licenses were unrepresented at the Tax Institute gathering.

On the other hand, many of the papers, among them those on "Barring the Use of Margarine through Taxation," "Tax Barriers to Trade with Respect to Alcoholic Beverages," "Protectionism and Chain Store Taxes," and "Judicial Trends with Respect to Trade Barriers," are of conspicuous merit.

As for solving the problem of interstate barriers to trade, the suggestions of the contributors to that section of the symposium ring no bells. They can be summed up as coöperation between states, federal leadership and federal pressure through grants in aid. Human selfishness, when supported by strong blocks of votes, and the inertia of vested interests, entrenched in the constitutional privileges of the states, will probably continue from time to time to produce protectionist state legislation.

By way of compensation, however, some obstacles to trade, coupled with the other inconsistencies and conflicts in our tax system, are a low price to pay for freedom and self-government. Furthermore, a candid reading of *Tax Barriers to Trade* leaves the encouraging impression—intentional or not—

that current tax obstructions to interstate trade are not a serious menace to national prosperity. Those that are not justified measures of self-protection are limited in scope and not infrequently, as Professor Maurice Lee points out in the case of chain store taxes, ineffective.

THOMAS H. REED

New York City

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**Canada in Peace and War.** Edited by Chester Martin. New York, Oxford University Press, 1941. xix, 244 pp. \$1.75.

This book contains a series of eight studies in national trends since 1914, and is issued under the auspices of the Canadian Institute of International Affairs. Professor Martin, under whose editorship the studies have been published, has contributed an illuminating foreword and a first chapter on "Trends in Canadian Nationhood." Seven other chapters are included as follows: "Federal Relations in Canada since 1914," by D. C. Creighton; "Economic Trends," by H. A. Innis; "Population Problems and Policies," by V. W. Bladen; "Canada and the Last War," by F. H. Underhill; "Canadian External Relations," by G. P. De T. Glazebrook; "Canadian and Imperial War Cabinets," by R. MacGregor Dawson; and "Democracy in the Overseas Dominions," by Alexander Brady.

While these studies do not include some important aspects of Canadian development, such as trends in party politics and problems of race and social adjustment, they do cover a rather wide range of significant topics and on the whole they are remarkably well integrated. Professor Creighton's study is an offshoot of his work for the Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations. It discusses one important phase of the situation which led to



creation of the so-called Rowell-Sirois Commission. Professor Innis presents a broad survey of economic trends in Canada which is both impressive and disquieting. The fourth, fifth, and sixth studies are mainly historical in their treatment of the subject matter. In the seventh study Professor Dawson discusses the flexibility of the cabinet system in Great Britain and the Dominions which permits the establishment of war cabinets, absolved from departmental and parliamentary routine, in speeding up war administration. Finally, Professor Brady presents an interesting study of democracy in the Dominions, particularly in Canada.

The book has apparently been written as much to educate Americans as to interest Canadians. For this purpose it would seem to be an excellent contribution. It might have been somewhat improved by including an index.

A. E. BUCK

Institute of Public Administration

## Additional Books and Reports Received

### *Education*

**America's Free Schools.** New York, Council for Democracy, 1941. 42 pp. Ten cents.

**Elementary School Classrooms.** By N. L. Englehardt and School Planning Associates. New York, Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1941. xvi, 80 pp. illus. \$3.

**Financing of Schools as a Function of State Departments of Education.** By Timon Covert. Washington, D. C., U. S. Office of Education, 1941. vi, 34 pp. Ten cents. (Apply to Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.)

**Know Your Community as a Basis for Understanding the Schools' Problems.** By Bess Goodykoontz. Washington, D. C., U. S. Office of Education, 1941. 35 pp. Ten cents. (Apply to Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.)

**The Literature of Adult Education.** By Ralph A. Beals and Leon Brody. New York, American Association for Adult Education, 1941. xvii, 493 pp. \$2.

**Practices and Concepts Relating to City Boards of Education.** By W. S. Deffenbaugh. Washington, D. C., U. S. Office of Education, 1941. iii, 27 pp. Five cents. (Apply to Superintendent of Documents, Washington, D. C.)

### *Legislative Bodies*

**Congressional Procedure.** By Floyd M. Riddick. Boston. Chapman and Grimes, 1941. xix, 387 pp. \$4.

### *Municipalities*

**Municipal Legislation of 1941.** A Review of State Legislation of Interest to Municipalities. Chicago, American Municipal Association, 1941. 20 pp. mimeo.

### *Public Works*

**Long-Range Programming of Municipal Public Works.** Report of the Public Works Committee to the National Resources Planning Board. Washington, D. C., Superintendent of Documents, 1941. vii, 72 pp. Thirty cents.

### *Tort Liability*

**Tort Liability of Municipalities in Massachusetts.** With Special Reference to Its Administration in Boston, 1934-1938. By Edgar Fuller. Cambridge, Bureau for Research in Municipal Government, Harvard Graduate School of Public Administration, 1941. iv, 56 pp.

### *Trade Barriers*

**A Modern Toll Gate.** Comparative Study of Taxes and Industrial Development in Kentucky and Neighboring States. Louisville, Kentucky Tax Research Association, 1941. 16 pp. charts.